

SECRET SERVICE

OLD AND YOUNG KING BRADY, DETECTIVES.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post-Office, March 1, 1899, by Frank Tousey.

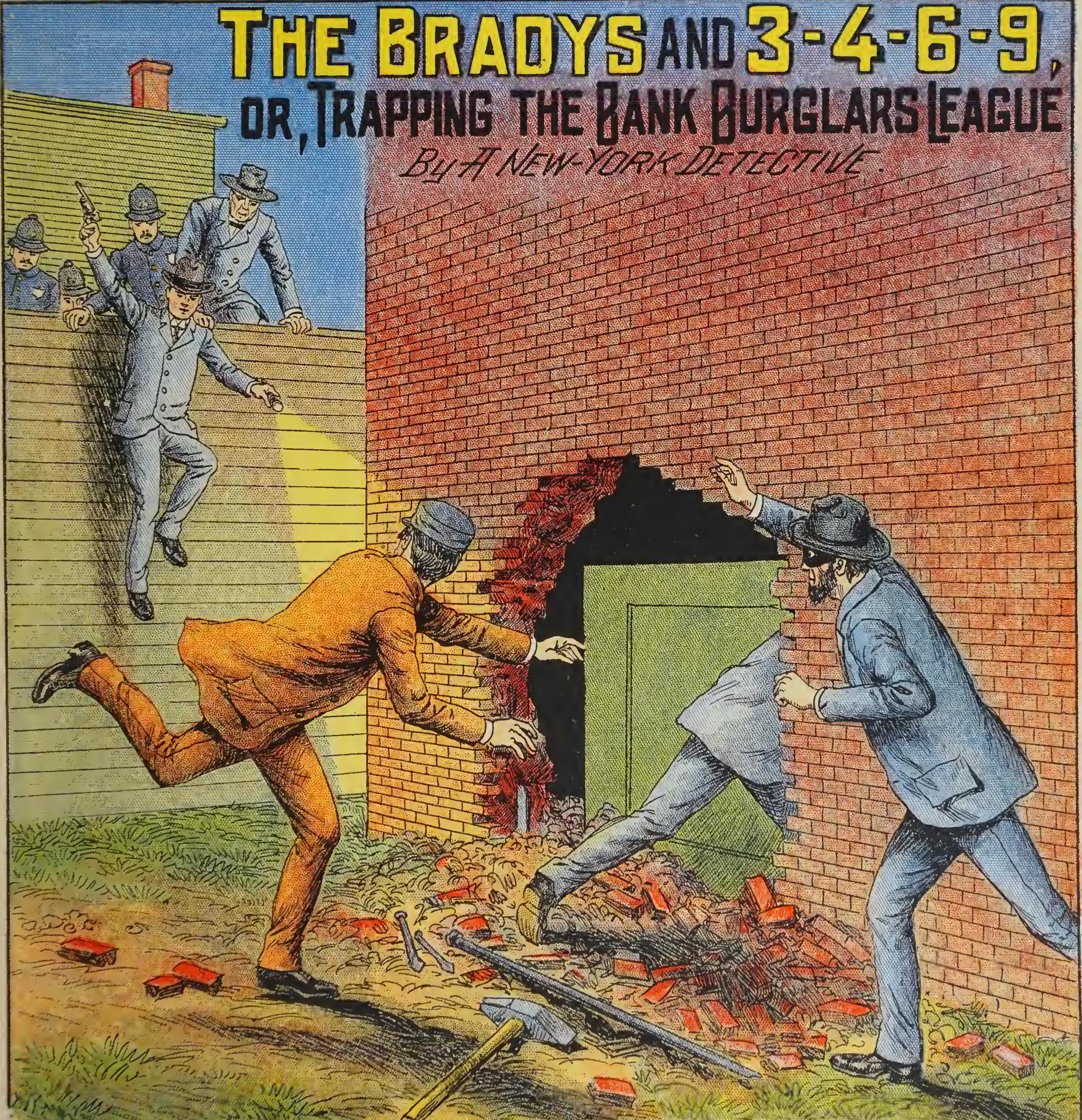
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NEW YORK, JANUARY 8, 1909.

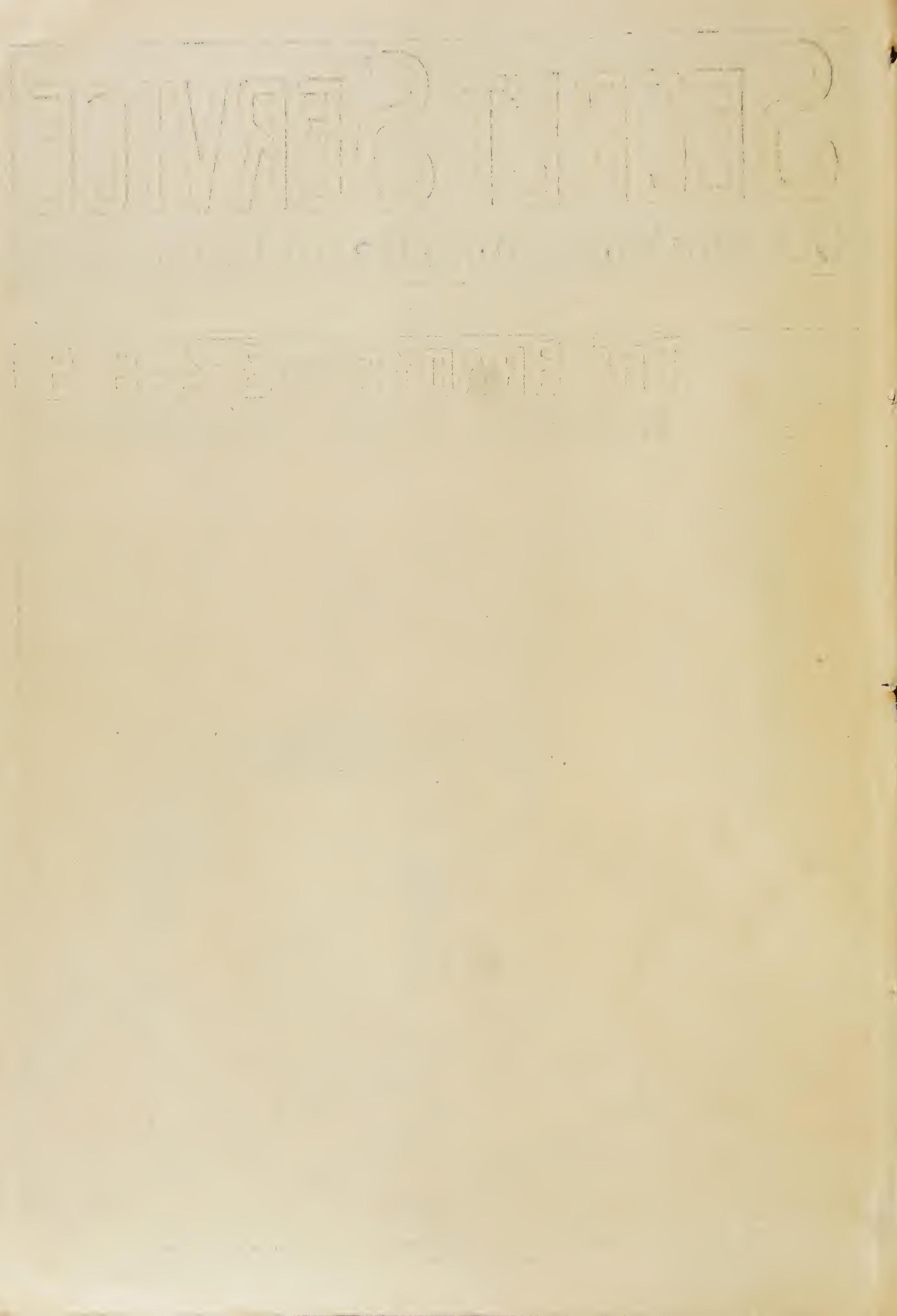
Price 5 Cents.

THE BRADYS AND 3-4-6-9, OR, TRAPPING THE BANK BURGLARS LEAGUE

By A NEW-YORK DETECTIVE.



The Bradys and the police gained the top of the fence just in time to trap the burglars. They had forced the door of the vault. One was entering. "Cops! Cops!" shouted another, and he started to run



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CHAPTER I.

THE LOVERS AND THE SPY.

"Well, Uncle Theo, it has come!"

"Ha! That Denver gold! They are a day ahead of time. But it can't be helped, of course. You must receive it, Dick. See it carefully stowed away in the vault."

Dick Welch, the young cashier of the Nineteenth Bank of Chicago was the speaker, and it was his uncle, Colonel Theodore F. McCauslan, president of said bank, who replied.

The time was a few minutes before five o'clock on a certain September afternoon.

Dick Welch looked at his uncle with some display of curiosity upon his face, for the bank president spoke with a certain air of vexation, and the cashier was not able to understand why.

"What difference does it make?" he asked. "I should think you would be glad that the gold ingots have arrived safely. There are two hundreds thousand dollars worth. Considering all the holdups we hear about on western trains, I shall be thankful when these ingots are safe in the vault.

Col. McCausland looked up at his nephew sharply.

"Great Scott, Dick," he exclaimed. "What's the matter with you? What are you reading me a lecture for? I am not aware that I have expressed any sorrow at the early arrival of the nuggets. But there! I don't want to call you down. Tell the driver to wait a minute before he begins to unload. The clerks are almost all gone, and you and I will see the stuff carried in and safely stowed away when the last of them have departed. There have been so many bank burglaries in Chicago lately that I am taking no chances, and trusting no one—see?"

"All right, sir," replied the cashier, and he passed out of the president's office by the private door, and going down on La Salle street, informed the driver of the express wagon of what had been said.

"Gee!" exclaimed the driver. "I hope he don't keep me waiting long then. I am anxious to get this stuff off me hands."

"Col. McCauslan is boss here," replied Dick, emphatically. "Here we do just what he says."

And he returned to the bank.

Two of the clerks came down the steps of the building as he went up.

When Dick entered the bank the only employee remaining was old Mr. Miles, the check clerk.

He stood near his desk with his hat on, talking to the president in low, confidential tones.

"Very well, Mr. McCauslan," he said in Dick's hearing. "We understand each other perfectly. Of course it is up to me to do just as you say."

And with that Mr. Miles departed, too.

As soon as he had gone Dick Welch and his uncle got busy over the Denver gold.

It came in small boxes, each containing so many ingots.

These boxes the president and cashier saw carefully stowed away in the vault, which opened from the president's private room.

The expressman then departed, and uncle and nephew found themselves alone.

Col. McCauslan was a fair specimen of our young-old men.

His age was scarcely forty, and yet his hair and mustache were white.

He was a prominent clubman in Chicago, and among his friends was known as a man of sporty tendencies.

A careful dresser, fond of good living, a game of poker, an occasional dip into the races, but all in a quiet, gentlemanly way.

In the financial world he had the reputation of being a strict disciplinarian, and a most skillful financier.

He was also a bachelor, although fond of ladies' society.

As for his private fortune, rumors pronounced it very large.

Dick Welch was the only child of Col. McCauslan's deceased sister.

Taken in the bank as a boy, he had advanced solely on his own merits.

Because the young man, who was just turned twenty-three, was one of the kind who could not be kept down, he had gone steadily up and now had been for a little less than a year the bank's cashier, the promotion coming to him through the death of a man who had held the position since the organization of the Nineteenth Bank.

"Well! That job is off our hands!" exclaimed Colonel McCauslan, "and it is a relief to have it so, upon my word. But, Dick, I am worried. I wish this infernal gold had never come my way."

"And why, Uncle Theo?"

"Why! Because of these bank burglaries. You know as well as I do that there have been three banks burglarized in Chicago within the last two months, not to mention half a dozen country banks in various parts of northern Illinois."

"But no one knows that this gold has been delivered here but the express company and ourselves, Uncle Theo."

"And the people of the Denver bank which shipped it to us, the express agent on the train which brought it over, and a half a dozen others. As I have told you, Dick, we bank presidents suspect the existence of a burglar's league in this town. Is it any wonder I am worried? But, my dear boy, while my worries are nothing

to you, there is one favor you can do for me to-night, if you will."

"And what is that?"

"Where are you going this evening?"

Dick reddened and replied in a confused way:

"Why, I hardly know. I—I have a private engagement, and—"

"And being private, you don't care to tell me what it is. Oh, very well. It doesn't matter. Your old uncle certainly has no desire to pry into your private affairs. But what I was thinking was this. If you could look around here about midnight and see that everything is O.K. it would be a relief. As you are aware, our watchman is laid up sick, and I have not cared to put a stranger on the job. But don't put yourself out, Dick. I dare-say it is a case of petticoats. A man can only be young once, and I would be the last to interfere."

"I'll come," replied Dick. "But how shall I get in?"

"I'll give you the key to the alley door, and the inside key. In that way you can slip in without attracting attention in case any officious policeman is disposed to butt in."

The keys were given up, and Dick Welch departed.

Little did he imagine what all this was to mean to him.

Little can any of us tell what the future has in store for us in this world of quick changes.

So Dick Welch went his way, and his way took him to a noted restaurant on Washington street, and after supper to his room over on the West Side—Monroe street, near Loomis, to be a little more accurate.

Here he dressed up in his best, and at eight o'clock turned up at a certain house on Park avenue, above Paulina street.

This was Dick's night to call on his girl.

Dick's girl was Teenie Rogers, who had formerly been stenographer for his uncle at the bank.

But Teenie was out of the typewriting business now.

An old aunt died and left her just about money enough to live on comfortably without work.

So Teenie took a house on Park avenue, and there she and her mother lived on the first floor, letting out the upper rooms to lodgers.

"Oh, Dick, I am so glad you have come!" exclaimed Teenie, who opened the door herself in answer to the young man's ring. "Where have you been for the last three days, you bad boy? You know you promised to call night before last?"

"Why, didn't you get my note?" demanded Dick, who had followed the girl into the parlor.

"Indeed, I got no word from you, sir! I had almost made up my mind to throw you over and accept your uncle after all!"

"Don't speak so, Teenie. It makes me shudder. Of course it seems wicked to say so, but if you knew my uncle as well as I do—"

"Cut it out, Dick. All that ground has been gone over before. You know that I have had more than one offer to change my name to McCauslan, and that in spite of my refusals your uncle still persists in calling here. Of course I can't order him out. He has always treated me well, and—"

"Wait! Does he suspect that we are engaged?"

"He cannot from anything I have told him, Dick, for I have told him nothing at all."

"Sometimes I have thought he suspected that I was visiting here. I thought so to-night. There will be an awful row when he finds me out, Teenie. I expect nothing else than to lose my position at the bank."

"Don't let that worry you, dear. You know very well how I love you. You know also that I have enough to support us both. If that happens, we must marry at once, and you shall have a home until you can find another place."

"Never!" cried Dick. "I am not that kind! Until I can support a wife I don't marry, that's flat. But about that letter. I wrote it at the bank, and like a fool, put it in our letter box for the boy to mail. Can my uncle have got hold of it? By jove! it looks very much that way."

"I am sure I hope not," said Teenie, adding:

"But never mind. If we are discovered, we must face the music, that's all. I—really, Miss Ludlum!"

Just here there came an interruption.

The lovers were in pretty close contact it must be admitted; indeed, they were occupying the same chair, when the door was suddenly opened and a stylishly dressed young woman of singular beauty hastily entered the room.

"Excuse me, Miss Rogers," she said in a whisper, as Teenie sprang to her feet. "Don't look around and don't answer aloud, but there is a man standing on the piazza. He has been peering in at you, and I don't think your lace curtains are sufficient protection. Sorry to have intruded, but I felt that you ought to know."

Teenie Rogers was one of the cool kind and she acted sensibly.

"Miss Ludlum, Mr. Welch," she said. "Dick, Miss Ludlum has a room here in the house."

Dick arose and shook hands.

He could stand it.

Next to Teenie, he thought Miss Ludlum the most beautiful woman he had ever seen.

But Dick was partial. The fact is there was no comparison between them—the advantage so far as looks was concerned was all on Miss Ludlum's side.

It was a warm evening, and the windows, which opened down to the level of the floor, had been thrown up. The lace curtains were fluttering in the evening breeze.

Teenie glided to the open piano and, sitting down, began to play.

Miss Ludlum leaned upon the instrument, while Dick, with apparent carelessness, strolled towards the window.

Suddenly parting the curtains, he stepped out upon the piazza.

"There is no one out here," he declared, returning into the room.

"That may be," replied Miss Ludlum, quietly, "but there was someone there a minute ago."

"How do you know?" asked Teenie. "Where were you that you could see?"

"I was passing through the hall. I thought I heard a noise, so I lightly opened the front door."

Teenie played on.

She was wondering what Miss Ludlum had been doing in the hall before she opened the door.

She had not failed to observe the look of admiration which Dick bestowed upon her mother's lodger.

Teenie, as she played on, was of the opinion that Miss Ludlum's room might be wanted by the end of the week.

"It must have been some sneak thief," observed Dick. "If he had found the room vacant he would have slipped in."

"He didn't look that way," replied Miss Ludlum. "He was dressed like a gentleman. He had white hair and a white mustache."

"Great Scott!" muttered Dick. "Teenie, did you hear that?"

"Hush!" breathed Miss Ludlum. "He is looking in the window now!"

It was too much for Dick, and he wheeled about.

Sure enough, through the slightly parted curtains a face was peering at them.

Instantly it was withdrawn, but Dick and Teenie both saw it plainly.

It was the face of Col. McCauslan, president of the Nineteenth Bank.

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERIOUS LETTER—THE TRAGEDY AT THE BANK.

"Discovered!" breathed Dick Welch, disgustedly.

"What did I tell you?" said Miss Ludlum. "I think I will go upstairs now."

"Wait!" flashed Teenie. "I don't care! If he is man enough to do that, let him do it. I don't care what you think, either, Miss Ludlum. I had just as soon you would know that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Welch as not."

"I congratulate you," replied Miss Ludlum. "In fact, I congratulate you both. Evidently you know that party who sees fit to play the spy."

"Not only that, but I am going to have it out with him!" cried Dick, starting for the window.

"Oh, Dick, do be careful!" gasped Teenie. "Don't let there be any quarrel over me."

"He has no business to do it!" cried Dick. "If he wants to give me the bounce, let him bounce me, but he shan't come between me and the girl I love!"

Dick was thoroughly aroused now.

He was determined to have it out with his uncle and be done with it.

So he pushed out on the piazza, but there was no one to be seen, either there or on the street.

No enemy being in evidence, of course there was no one to fight, so Dick came back into the room.

"Well!" exclaimed Miss Ludlum. "There doesn't seem to have been murder done."

"He is gone!" replied Dick.

"And you want me to go, too. Well, good evening. I hope, Miss Rogers, that you are not angry with me for calling your attention to this little matter. It seemed best."

"I'm sure I don't care anything about it, one way or the other!" cried Teenie, tossing her head. "A girl can't marry everybody who asks her. If Col. McCauslan wants to be jealous that's his lookout. I have told him times enough that I can never become his wife."

To this Miss Ludlum made no reply, but quietly left the parlor.

"Was there anything so provoking!" cried Teenie. "What business has she to interfere with my private affairs?"

"Oh, really now, Teenie, I think she meant it kindly," replied Dick.

But Teenie was jealous on her own account now.

She slammed down both windows, and locked them.

"Come into the back room," she said. "We can shut the folding doors. I shall just give Col. McCauslan a good piece of my mind if he ever has the face to call here again!"

It looked as if a lovers' quarrel might be brewing, but it did not come.

Dick knew how to quiet Teenie's jealousy, and they parted friends shortly before midnight.

When Dick got out on to Park avenue he was deeply perplexed.

What was to be done about it?

He had nothing to depend upon but his salary at the bank.

An open break with his uncle meant all kinds of trouble."

He felt that the break had to come.

Dick walked down the avenue towards the park.

Hearing footsteps behind him, and thinking that it might be his uncle, he looked back.

The person was about half a block off.

He was a young man apparently, not much older than himself, as near as Dick could make out.

Reaching Ashland avenue, Dick struck across the park.

The night was overcast, and it would have been dark enough, but for the electric lights.

As Dick was passing a little tool house two men with handkerchiefs tied over the lower part of their faces suddenly sprang out upon him.

So quickly was it done that Dick was taken by surprise.

One struck him a fearful blow between the eyes.

As he went reeling backward the other flung an arm about his neck and planted his knee in the boy's back.

Down went Dick on the path, and never a chance to strike even one blow.

"Quick! Go through him!" cried the other.

Hold ups had been disgustingly common in Chicago of late.

Poor Dick thought he was done for.

Many a man who resisted had been done to death.

Dick did not try it.

He felt that he had sooner yield up his watch and what little money he had than lose his life.

The fellow planted his knee in Dick's stomach, and snatched his watch, also a little scarf pin of slight value.

Then he went for the boy's pockets, tackling the inside pocket of the coat.

But as he did so a shot was heard.

"Surrender, you fellows, or you are dead oars!" a strong, manly voice shouted.

Someone was running.

Then someone else ran—two someones—the hold-up men!

They were gone like a flash, and when Dick scrambled to his feet there was the young man whom he had seen behind him on Park avenue ready to help.

"By jove! you were up against it for fair!" exclaimed the newcomer. "Have you lost much? I am a detective. Shall I follow those fellows? Speak quick."

"No," said Dick, for he felt that he had sooner have this man's company than recover his lost goods.

He felt faint and nervous. The blow he had received was a severe one. He was half dazed.

"Just as you say," replied the other. "Did those rascals get much?"

"They got my watch, it was only three dollars, and a stick pin, worth perhaps five. They were just going for my money when you fired."

"You got off lucky. All the same I wish I had been quicker. What are you people in Chicago thinking about that you let these things go on? Why, there are hold-ups every night."

"I guess there are," replied Dick. "But it was partly my own fault. I was a fool to come through the park."

"How do you feel? Your forehead is swelling. He gave you a bad crack there between the eyes."

"Oh, I shall be all right. I want to thank you just the same."

"Don't mention it. Which way are you going? If you don't mind I'll inflict my presence on you for a few moments. You have been hard hit. You might be taken faint."

"I was going to take a Madison street car. I am going downtown."

"So am I then. I'm stopping at the Sherman House. It won't be out of my way to go with you; but I don't want to butt in. If you say so, I'll pull out."

"No, no! I am only too glad to have you with me," replied Dick.

He did not say much until they had boarded the car.

By this time Dick had in a measure recovered himself.

He had also been doing a lot of quick thinking.

"Can Uncle Theo have been responsible for this?" he asked himself. "Did he hire those two toughs to do me up?"

And he had reason for the thought.

For Dick knew things about the bank president which the world did not know—a few.

He was to learn more before many days had passed.

But even now he knew that if his uncle was behind this cowardly assault it would not be the first time.

For Col. McCauslan was a man of low tastes and low associations.

"Confound him! I believe he was back of it," thought Dick.

But just here the detective butted in.

"Say, we might as well know each other, if you have

no objection," he said. "Here's my card. May I ask your name?"

"Dick Welch," replied the young cashier as he took the card.

It was peculiarly worded, reading:

YOUNG KING BRADY,

Detective.

Brady Detective Bureau. No. — Union Square.

New York.

"So you are one of the famous firm of Brady!" exclaimed Dick.

"Famous or infamous," laughed the detective. "It depends upon which way you view it. We have an extensive circle of criminal acquaintances who would be likely to put us in the latter class, if you were to ask their opinion of the Bradys."

"I have often heard of you. Is Old King Brady still active in the business?"

"Indeed, yes. He is with me in Chicago at the present time."

"Let us see, there is a lady partner in your bureau, is there not?"

"Yes. Miss Alice Montgomery, and a most skillful detective she is. We should hardly know how to get on without her. But let me offer a suggestion."

"Certainly. What is it?"

"Go through your pockets. Those light-fingered gentlemen are very often quick workers. You may have lost more than you suppose."

Dick smiled.

"It is hardly possible that I can have lost much more, since I have less than five dollars about me," he replied.

He felt in the watch pocket of his trousers, and added: "And that is safe."

Didn't they tackle your pockets at all?" inquired Young King Brady.

"Yes; the fellow who pinned me down put his hand into the inside pocket of my coat."

"Try it then."

"But there is nothing in the pocket."

"Try it."

"Why, yes there is!" cried Dick as he obeyed.

He pulled out a letter, and as he looked at the address on the envelope his face changed.

Young King Brady was quick to observe this, and he naturally would be, for he is one of the most skillful detectives in America.

"Well, what about that?" he demanded, and he deliberately took the letter out of Dick's hand.

It was sealed and had a stamp on it, but it had not been through the mail.

"Col. L. F. McCauslan, No. — La Salle street, Chicago, Ills.," Young King Brady read.

And he demanded abruptly:

"Do you know that man?"

"Yes."

"He is your uncle?"

"Well, he is. How did you know?"

"It is my business to know things, Mr. Welch. Take my advice and open that letter. Or perhaps you yourself wrote it. Perhaps it was in your pocket before."

"It certainly was not!" cried Dick, deeply puzzled.

He began to distrust his new acquaintance, who appeared to have a very remarkable insight into his private affairs."

"Then the hold-up man must have put the letter into your pocket," declared the detective. "I advise you to open it right away."

"By thunder, I have a great mind to do it," said Dick. "This is certainly very strange."

"Do it!" cried the detective. "Why do you hesitate?"

"But I don't like to open other people's letters."

"Nonsense! That is it is nonsense if you are positive that you didn't have the letter in your pocket before the hold-up men tackled you."

"I am absolutely certain I did not."

"Then let one who has had some experience with these things mildly suggest that somebody is putting up a job on you, Dick Welch."

"Upon my word, I begin to think so!"

"Will you open that letter?"

"Yes," replied Dick, desperately, and he tore open the envelope and pulled out a half sheet of ordinary newspaper.

Unfolding this he discovered that it was blank, save for a few figures.

These were in the middle of the paper.

They read:

"3-4-6-9."

"What on earth does this mean?" exclaimed Dick.

"Give it up," replied Young King Brady, who was copying the figures into his memorandum book, "but there is one thing certain, Welch. You want to look out for yourself. You have my card. If you need my help call on me. No charge. So long. I'm leaving you here."

He was gone before Dick could reply, for he sat at the end of the open car seat and now he dropped into the street.

And it was only Halstead street.

Young King Brady had changed his mind about going down town, it seemed!

Dick was puzzled and excited.

"Dear me, I wish he had stayed with me," he thought. "They say these Bradys are the most wonderful detectives in the world. He might have advised me—why he did! He told me if I needed him to call on him. It was all he could do without actually forcing his services upon me, and I suppose he did not like to do that. This is a queer business. What on earth can it mean? One thing is sure, though. That man must have put this mysterious letter into my pocket. It never could have got in there in any other way."

Thus puzzling his brain about the business, Dick rode on to his destination.

Instead of going to La Salle street, he left the car at Fifth avenue and walked through the alley.

It was now halfpast twelve.

In spite of what had happened Dick resolved to remain true to his promise and visit the bank.

And it was a bit singular that the thought never occurred to the young man that this might be a plot against him.

Perhaps if he had stated all the circumstances to Young King Brady he might have got the tip.

Reaching the side door of the building in which the bank was located, he unlocked it, and securing it behind him, struck matches and lighted himself up one short flight.

Here there were three doors leading into the bank.

Two communicated with the main room, while the third led directly into the directors room beyond, which was Col. McCauslan's private office.

To this door fitted the second key which Dick's uncle had given him.

Dick opened the door and turned on the light.

He opened his eyes, too, for now he saw what he was up against.

The vault door also stood open—wide open!

Near the desk, stretched upon the floor, lay the body of a man, face downward.

"Uncle Theo!" gasped Dick.

He rushed forward and turned the body over.

It was indeed Col. McCauslan.

He had been shot in the forehead.

He was dead!

And a revolver lay beside the body upon the floor.

CHAPTER III.

DICK IN THE TOILS.

Dick was terribly shocked.

Not that he had the least respect for his uncle.

But up to the present time he had been fond of the man in a way.

For Dick's father died before he was born, and his mother before he could remember.

Col. McCauslan had brought the boy up after a fashion.

At least he had always looked after him and paid his bills.

And now the man was dead!

But Dick had something else to think about.

This was the Denver gold.

The fact of the vault being open looked ominous.

Dick hurried inside.

It was so!

The box containing the golden ingots which had been placed in the outer vault were missing.

This vault was double.

Within the first massive steel door was an open space where the books were kept upon shelves; boxes containing the various securities of the bank were stored here also, but no money.

This was kept within an inner compartment behind a second steel door, controlled not by a lock, but by a secret spring.

Now this peculiar arrangement had been suggested by Col. McCauslan himself, and some years before the opening of our story he had caused this vault to be constructed in accordance with his idea.

Originally the secret spring had been known to two—upon this the bank directors insisted.

One was the old cashier, now dead, the other was Col. McCauslan himself.

When the cashier died, and Dick was advanced to his position, the young man supposed that he would be intrusted with the secrets of the spring.

But the weeks passed, and this was not done.

Once Dick spoke of it, and his uncle replied that the matter must be attended to, and that he would tell him next day.

He did not.

A week later Dick reminded him of it, but was told not to bother him then.

Once more he tried it, only to be again turned down, so feeling that his uncle did not intend to do it at all, he gave up and allowed the matter to lapse.

When Dick examined the inner door he found it locked.

The question now was whether anyone living knew the workings of the secret spring.

Dick came out of the vault and stood looking at the dead man.

What affection he had felt for his uncle as a boy returned with a rush.

He bent down over the body, feeling that he ought to find out whether Col. McCauslan had been robbed as well as murdered.

For while Dick was in the vault two men had entered the bank at the front door and they stood in the half open door of the directors' room watching him now.

"Well, Mr. Welch! What have you been doing here?"

Dick started up in terror.

There stood Dr. Baker, managing director of the Nineteenth Bank, and with him was old Mr. Miles, the check clerk, concerning whom a word must be said before we proceed.

He was a tall man with prominent features, scrupulously dressed, but in rather an old-fashioned style, his eyes being concealed behind green-tinted spectacles, which made it impossible to catch the true expression of his face.

Mr. Miles was a newcomer at the bank.

In fact he had been engaged by Col. McCauslan only a week before.

Previous to his coming there had been no check clerk at the bank, the work being divided among several. Dick was surprised when he learned that the old man had been engaged, but as he was not in his uncle's confidence, he indulged in no comments.

Meanwhile Mr. Miles took hold as if he understood the business, but made no acquaintances.

Several times Dick found him in private conversation with Col. McCauslan, which had caused him to wonder if there might not be some particular reason for Mr. Miles having been employed.

Such was the man who in company with Dr. Baker came suddenly upon Dick Welch now.

"Oh, Doctor! Oh, Mr. Miles! My uncle is dead!" gasped Dick, scarcely realizing in his excitement what he was saying.

"So I perceive," replied Dr. Baker, coldly, as he fixed his keen, penetrating eyes upon Dick.

"He has been murdered!"

"Did you murder him?"

Dick felt a cold chill shoot down his spine.

Not until now did our youthful cashier realize the position he was in.

But he was up in arms in an instant.

"How dare you say it!" he cried. "Murder him! Of course I didn't! Doctor, I did not think that of you!"

"Take it easy," said Dr. Baker, sneeringly. "We shall be able to get at the truth of this business, I dare say. Did that Denver gold arrive to-night?"

"Yes."

"Where is it now?"

"My uncle and I put it in the vault."

"In the inner compartment or the outer?"

"The outer."

"Why was it not put in the inner?"

"My uncle said that since it was to be forwarded to Philadelphia in the morning it was not necessary."

"When was this?"

"About five o'clock."

"Who put it in the vault?"

"He and I. The expressman helped."

"And then you two left the bank?"

"I left. Col. McCauslan remained behind."

"He did, hey? Perhaps he put the gold into the inner compartment after you left."

"He may have done so."

"Open it and let me see."

"I don't know the secret spring."

"What!" thundered the doctor, "do you mean to tell me that Col. McCauslan alone knew the workings of that spring?"

"He is the only one since Mr. Brower died."

"I don't believe a word of it. He told me with his own lips that he gave the secret to you."

"I am no liar, Dr. Baker!" flashed Dick. "Under different circumstances you would not dare call me one, either!"

"Stop!" said Mr. Miles, raising his hand. "This discussion can serve no good purpose. Doctor, Col. McCauslan is dead. He has been shot through the forehead. Somebody has been through him. His watch and everything of value is missing from his person. This is a very serious case."

"Well, I should say it was!" cried the doctor, glaring at Dick. "This young man ought to be made to tell all he knows."

"Permit me to question him."

"Certainly. Go ahead!"

Mr. Miles had picked up the revolver and held it while speaking.

For a moment now he looked steadily at Dick through his green spectacles and in silence.

Poor Dick was almost on the verge of collapse.

That he had stumbled upon deep trouble was certain. He scarcely knew what to do.

"What in the world brings Miles here in the doctor's company?" he asked himself.

It was something he could not understand.

At last the old check clerk broke silence. In a singularly mild tone he said:

"Mr. Welch, in answering the questions which I am about to put to you remember one thing; the law does not require you to open your mouth about this affair."

"But I want to!" cried Dick. "It is an outrage to charge me with any useless murder! I have nothing to conceal."

"As you will. Now then, what brought you here to the bank at this unusual hour?"

"I came by my uncle's order to see if everything was all right. Because there have been so many bank burglaries lately he was afraid on account of the gold."

"Just so. And when you came in here what did you find?"

"What you see now."

"How long have you been here?"

"I came in scarcely five minutes ahead of you."

"Was the body in the same position as it is now?"

"No. It lay face downward."

"You turned it over?"

"Yes. But look here, Mr. Miles, I don't know what right you have to ask all these questions. What we want here is a detective. Someone who can solve this mystery."

"Ha!" broke in Dr. Baker. "That's a good idea. And who would you suggest, young man?"

"Someone like the famous Bradys of New York. I happen to know that they are in Chicago at the present moment, and—"

Dick stopped short.

A peculiar smile was seen to creep over Mr. Miles' face.

Dr. Baker laughed outright.

"If you think this is a laughing matter, Dr. Baker, then I don't!" flashed Dick.

"Certainly not," replied the doctor. "Your suggestion shall be considered. But in the meantime how did you come in here? Mr. Miles and I were standing in front of the bank for ten minutes before we came in. We saw nothing of you."

"I came down through the alley from Fifth avenue, and entered by the side door."

"How did you come to have the key?"

"My uncle gave it to me. I came here by his order, as I told you."

"Step outside into the directors' room," said Mr. Miles, "I wish to speak to Dr. Baker alone."

"I don't know that I am obliged to obey you!" flashed Dick. "I am cashier of this bank. You are only the check clerk."

"As you will. I can easily enforce my order."

"Perhaps you can, and perhaps you can't."

"Officer!" cried Mr. Miles, "take this young man into the other room!"

Dick's heart sank as a policeman appeared in the doorway.

Instead of improving the situation was growing rapidly worse.

"Come in here!" called the policeman. "You don't want to make trouble for yourself—see?"

Dick passed into the directors' room, and Dr. Baker closed the door.

"Who is that old man?" Dick demanded.

"Don't ask me nothing," replied the policeman. "And say, if youse is a wise guy you'll keep your mout shut tight—see? I'm not tellin' you what you must do or mustn't do. I'm only givin' you de straight tip."

Dick waited in silence.

It seemed to him as if the end of everything had come.

What would Teenie think when she heard of his uncle's death and of his own arrest?

How would it sound on the witness stand if Teenie was forced to tell of Col. McCauslan's intrusion, and of his own jealousy against his uncle?

All these reflections went coursing through the boy's brain until he was almost wild.

At last Dr. Baker opened the door.

"Come in, Mr. Welch," he called.

"I want to ask you a few more questions," said Mr. Miles. "Be good enough to examine this revolver."

As Dick took the weapon in his hand he turned deathly pale.

"Is this the revolver you picked up by my uncle's body?" he gasped.

"It is. Do you recognize it?"

"Yes. It is my revolver."

The words burst from the boy in a tone of utter despair.

"You could hardly deny it," said Mr. Miles, "since your name is engraved on the handle. Moreover, I happened to have observed this revolver in the drawer of your desk."

"It is my revolver, and I left it in the drawer of my desk when I left the bank."

"Let me have it."

Dick handed it back.

"You seem to be in a bad box, Welch," observed Dr. Baker.

"Yes."

"However, every man is supposed to be innocent until he can be proved guilty. I have determined to adopt your suggestion."

"What was that?"

"To hire a good detective."

"Oh."

"You named Old King Brady."

"I said the Bradys."

"Old King Brady is the head of the firm. Would you like to see him?"

"I intend to see him—if I can."

"You can," broke in Mr. Miles, suddenly removing the green spectacles. "You see him now."

"You!"

"Even so! I am Old King Brady, Mr. Welch. I have been working for your uncle for a week. I'm very sorry, but it becomes my painful duty to arrest you for his murderer!"

And this was the way Dick Welch came to be introduced to Old King Brady.

It was too much for the nerves of this much tired young man.

He started to speak, and then suddenly reeling, fell in a faint to the floor.

"Ha! He's guilty all right," cried Dr. Baker.

"This by no means proves his guilt," replied the old detective. "I have seen innocent men do the fainting act many times, doctor, and I have also seen hardened criminals assume an air of innocence which would deceive the shrewdest detective who ever lived. Guilty he may be, innocent he may be! Which it is up to me to prove."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BRADYS HARD AT WORK.

The news of the arrest of Dick Welch for the murder of his uncle, Col. Theodore F. McCauslan, came to Teenie Rogers through the medium of the morning papers.

It was a terrible shock.

Mrs. Rogers saw it in the paper first, and broke it to her daughter as gently as possible.

But Teenie was an excitable girl, and she immediately went into wild hysterics.

Miss Ludlum, whose room was on the same floor, heard her screams and came hurrying in to find out what it was all about.

Together they soon succeeded in calming the unfortunate girl.

"You want to brace right up," declared Miss Ludlum. "If your lover is innocent it is up to you to stand by him and help him all you can. This is a very serious business. Many an innocent man has gone to the gallows where he might have been saved if his friends had been quicker to help."

"But what can I do?" demanded Teenie. "Really I believe I am the only real friend poor Dick has in the world. He never went around with the boys much, for he preferred to spend his time reading and studying. Oh, Miss Ludlum, you don't know what a good young man he really is. It is just impossible that he can have committed this crime."

It was just at this juncture that the door bell rang, and a letter addressed to Teenie was handed in.

It proved to be from Dick.

Enclosed in it was the mysterious letter which he had found in his pocket after the assault, if the paper contained in the envelope can be so called, and there was also enclosed Young King Brady's card.

The letter to Teenie read thus:

"Dear Teenie.—By the time you receive this I suppose you will have learned of the dreadful trouble I am in. I can only write a line, for one is waiting to take it, and I am able through him to smuggle this out of the jail. Take the paper with the figures upon it at once to the detective whose name is on this card. He is staying at the Sherman House. Say to him that I want to see him as soon as possible, and that now is the time I am going to ask him to remember his promise. I am up against it, hard and fast. If he can't help me then no

one can, for the truth is, I have not five dollars to my name, and he promised to serve me free of charge.

Teenie, to you, all I can say is that I love you and I am innocent!

"Try and believe both."

"Lovingly yours.

"DICK."

Teenie handed the letter to Miss Ludlum.

"You have been good to me. Read it!" she said. "Read it aloud so that mother can hear."

Miss Ludlum did so.

"Dear me, I do hope Dick gets out of it. It is a dreadful thing to be accused of murder," sighed the widow. "But what is on that paper, Teenie?"

"Only figures," replied Teenie. "3-4-6-9. What in the world does it mean? The envelope it was in is addressed to Col. McCauslan."

"May I see?" asked Miss Ludlum.

Teenie handed her the paper.

"I suppose I must go and see this detective," she said. "But I am very sure he won't work for nothing. However, every dollar I possess is at Dick's service when it comes to that."

"If Young King Brady said he was willing to work for nothing he will," replied Miss Ludlum.

"What! Do you know him?" cried Teenie.

"Well, I should say I did," was the calm reply. "While we are not actually engaged, he has been paying me attention this long time, and I don't mind telling you, my dear, that he loves me quite as much as Dick loves you."

"Dear me! You don't say so!" cried Teenie. "But how did Dick come to know the man? I never heard him speak of him in my life."

"He met him last night after he left here," said Miss Ludlum, in the same way. "It was not altogether by accident, either, for Young King Brady had been hired by Col. McCauslan to shadow Dick."

"Hired to shadow him!" screamed Teenie. "For mercy sake what for?"

"Because he believed Dick to be associating with bank burglars, or at least he said he did. He also hired me to shadow you, Miss Rogers. That is why I engaged a room in this house."

"My goodness me!" cried Mrs. Rogers. "What impudence! Did Col. McCauslan think we were bank burglars here? Well, I never. But what on earth are you, Miss Ludlum, to know all this? You must be a detective yourself."

"That is what I am," replied the young woman, calmly. "I am a female detective, and a partner in the same bureau to which Young King Brady belongs. But I must enlighten you further, Mrs. Rogers, and you, too. Teenie, if you will permit me to call you so. My name is not Ludlum. It is Alice Montgomery. If you really wish to be of assistance to Dick, my orders are to take you with me to the Sherman House right away."

"Orders from who?" cried Mrs. Rogers. "I don't know about this."

"Orders from Old King Brady."

"But he is the man who arrested Dick."

"Then I don't go near him!" cried Teenie, hysterically.

"The idea! He might have seen by just looking in Dick's face that he is incapable of this terrible crime."

"It is up to you," said Miss Montgomery, as we must now call Mrs. Rogers' roomer. "If you want to aid your lover I advise you to listen not to what I say, but to what he says, and to take this paper to him at once."

"But Dick says take the paper to Young King Brady."

"It is all the same. We work together. Will you go?"

"Yes, right now!" cried Teenie, springing up.

Her mother objected.

Teenie overruled her objections.

Ten minutes later she and Miss Montgomery were on their way downtown.

Arrived at the Sherman House, they were obliged to wait some time, for both the Bradys were out, it seemed.

But at last there came into the room to which Miss Montgomery conducted Teenie a man whom Dick might have recognized as old Mr. Miles, the check clerk.

And yet he appeared very differently now, the change being particularly due to the quietness of his dress.

He wore a long blue coat with brass buttons, an old-fashioned stock and stand-up collar, and a big white hat with an extraordinary broad brim.

And such is always Old King Brady's way of dressing when not in disguise.

"Well, Alice, is this the young lady?" the old detective asked in a kindly way.

"Yes," was the reply. "This is Miss Rogers. Where is Harry? She has that paper for him which you mentioned in the letter you sent me this morning."

"Let me see it," said Old King Brady.

But Teenie had been doing some thinking for herself on the way/downtown.

Alice, as we shall hereafter call Miss Montgomery, had entered into no further explanations, nor had Teenie asked any question, for she did not like the idea of having been spied upon by a detective.

"I shan't do a thing or say a thing until I understand all this better," she flashed. "How dared you arrest Dick Welch, Mr. Brady? Don't you know he is an innocent man?"

"I am convinced that he is," was the quiet reply.

"Then why did you arrest him?"

"Circumstances required it. If I had not done so others would."

"But I want to know all. Why were you people hired to shadow me and Dick?"

"You have a right to know, and I will tell you. There have been many bank robberies in and about Chicago lately. The bank presidents got together and decided that something ought to be done. Then it was decided to employ my bureau to work on the matter, and to trace out these burglars. That was the time Col. McCauslan sprung a surprise on his associates by saying that he suspected his nephew, Dick Welch, of being mixed up with these burglars. It was therefore decided that I should enter the bank as a clerk and watch the young man; that my partner, Young King Brady, should follow him when he was away from the bank, and that Alice here should make your acquaintance."

"Well, I never!" cried Teenie, tossing her head. "I

guess you all had your labor for your pains, so far as finding out anything against me and Dick is concerned."

"Practically we had; but listen, Miss Rogers. That week which we put in on this business is likely to prove of the greatest assistance to your lover, for we became assured that there was a plot on foot against him."

"What sort of a plot?"

"That we don't know; but we are pretty well assured that the head plotter was the man who should have been his best friend, who now is dead."

"His uncle! I believe you!"

"Yes. Col. McCauslan himself. If the man had lived another day or so, I flatter myself I should have solved the mystery, but that is all over now, and we must do the best we can. So stands the case, young lady, and now are you willing to give me that paper? I fail to see how you can longer refuse."

Teenie failed to see, too, so she handed over the paper and the envelope.

Old King Brady studied the address a long time before even glancing at the figures.

"Same hand," he finally remarked as he passed the paper over to Alice.

"Surely, Mr. Brady."

"But these figures are a puzzle for fair."

"A cryptogram?"

"Hardly think so. They are more likely to have a definite meaning as they stand."

Old King Brady pocketed the papers and turned to Teenie again.

"Now, Miss Rogers, just a question or two, and I am done," he said. "Who is Ada Rea?"

"Why, she is my cousin!" cried Teenie. "What about her?"

"Did Dick know her?"

"I'm sure I hope not! She's a dreadful woman."

"Have you any reason to believe that he did?"

"No. He never heard of her through me. We never ever mention her name at my house."

"Of what does her dreadfulness consist?"

"Why, my goodness, Mr. Brady, she keeps a gambling house. It isn't anything else."

"Where?"

"Out on Michigan avenue."

"Do you know the number?"

"No."

"Is she married?"

"Yes; to a professional gambler. He's half dead, and she runs the house."

"Is she your mother's niece or your father's?"

"My father's."

"Are her parents living?"

"No; they are both dead. But what in the world has all this to do with the case?"

"I cannot explain. I must not for fear of injuring Dick."

"Does he know Ada Rea?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Is she rich?"

"Very rich. They say she is worth a million."

"How did she get her money?"

"Why her father left her some. She has made money

by running her gambling house, I suppose. I don't even speak to her when I meet her on the street. She hates my mother and me."

"So? Well, Miss Rogers, that is all. Now let me advise you to go to the jail on Illinois street and see your lover if you do truly love him. Say to him that the Bradys believe in his innocence, and are working for him, but that at the present stage of the game they cannot visit him. Tell him to put implicit trust in the lawyer I shall send to him to-day, and to trust no one else. Say last of all to cheer up and hope for the best."

"But I don't even know where the 'jail is,'" said Teenie. "I never go on the North Side."

"Miss Montgomery will go with you and see that you are admitted. Then she must leave you. Now a word of caution. Do you trust nobody in this matter. If anyone outside of myself and partners should approach you have nothing to do with him or with her, but at once report the fact to us. Alice, take her to the jail."

They left within a few minutes, missing Young King Brady by about five.

"Well, Harry, and what's the word?" demanded the old detective, as his partner entered.

"We are to wait on Dr. Baker at the bank in half an hour."

"So? Have they got the door of the inner vault open yet?"

"Yes; the safe expert had just succeeded in opening it when I left."

"And the gold?"

"Was not inside."

"Ha! So? Those rascals must have worked quick to make it out of that building if they did it after the murder, for Col. McCauslan's body was not cold when I arrived on the scene. The Rogers girl and Alice have just left."

"So? Did you get the original 3-4-6-9?"

"Yes."

"What about Ada Rea?"

"Why, Harry, she is the Roger girl's first cousin."

"You don't say so. Does the girl know that she and her husband keep that joint on Michigan avenue?"

"Oh, yes, she knows all about her, although they are not on speaking terms. But let me see that letter again. The Rea letter which you found in Dick Welch's drawer, I mean."

"Here it is; but why do you want it?"

"Because I fancy that the address is in the same hand as the 3-4-6-9 envelope."

"Is that so? Well, here it is."

And Harry produced a letter.

It was one of several letters found in the top drawer of Dick Welch's bureau, for that morning Harry had visited the young cashier's room on Monroe street, and had carefully gone through his effects.

Old King Brady laid the two envelopes side by side upon the table.

It needed no expert to see that he was right.

The handwriting of the two addresses was identical.

"A definite clew and our first!" exclaimed Old King Brady. "Now to see what can be made out of those very mysterious figures, 3-4-6-9."

CHAPTER V.

ANOTHER TRAGEDY AT THE BANK.

Even detectives find themselves balked sometimes. It was so with the Bradys in this matter of 3-4-6-9.

To be sure, they had but a few moments to devote to the puzzle, so it was put aside, to be taken up later.

Before they left for the bank Old King Brady read the letter addressed to Dick Welch aloud.

It was a curious missive, and ran thus:

"Mr. Richard Welch: Dear Sir.—You will, I know, be surprised to receive this letter from one who is an entire stranger to you, but I want you to understand that you are not a stranger to me.

"Although I am a married woman, and somewhat older than yourself—not so much—I have long known you by sight, and dear Mr. Welch, I have long secretly admired you!

"There, it is out!

"I can't help it. I think you are just the handsomest man I ever laid eyes on, and I want you for my husband when mine is dead, which he soon will be, for he is afflicted with an incurable disease, and the doctors say he can't live the year out.

"Now if you read this far you will begin to think that I am just about the boldest woman who ever came down the pike. But it is not altogether so. If it was only that I admired you personally I should not have the courage to write this letter. It is partly business. Let me explain.

"You probably have heard of me. Most young men about town have. I keep the clubhouse, No. — Michigan avenue; although my husband is nominally the proprietor, I attend to everything, and have for the last two years.

"Now I have been told that you are a splendid business man, and have an excellent address. My business is not the kind that a woman ought to be in. I am most anxious to retire into the background and put a man in charge.

"So, you see, dear Mr. Welch, I want you for a partner in a double sense, and when I tell you that I am worth over a million in Chicago real estate and good securities, I know you will think twice before you turn my proposition down.

"At any rate, dear Mr. Welch, come and see me, and talk it over. Write and make an appointment so I shall be sure to be home. I am yours to command.

"ADA REA."

"There!" exclaimed Old King Brady when he completed the reading of this remarkable missive. "You see, Harry, that the writing is the same as on both envelopes. While it would pass with a casual observer for a woman's hand, I am morally certain that it was written by a man, and since you first showed it to me, I have found out something else about this Ada Rea which only goes to bear out my theory of a plot against young Welch, in which his uncle was deeply concerned."

"Hello! And what does that long speech lead up to?" demanded Harry.

"Just this. I have made careful inquiries about Ada Rea. The woman is certainly very rich. Her husband lies at the point of death, just as she says, but the point is that Mrs. Rea is confined to her bed with a malignant cancer, and can't live but a very short time."

"Great Scott! Then she never could have written that letter."

"It is impossible to conceive it."

"Evidently a plot to get Welch into that house."

"It seems so to me."

"But why not ask him? Why do you keep away?"

"Harry, whoever is at the bottom of all this plotting is surely watching us. I am sending a lawyer to the young man, and he will be able to keep us posted on all important points."

"Oh, I see. It would be interesting to know if Welch went there."

"We shall soon know. Meanwhile we are due at the bank."

And to the bank the Bradys went forthwith.

They passed directly into the presence of Dr. Baker, who occupied the private office alone.

"Well, we opened the inner door, Mr. Brady," said the doctor, after Harry had been introduced. "It was as I feared. No gold."

"So my partner tells me," replied Old King Brady. "Has anything further been learned about Col. McCauslan's death?"

"Nothing. There can be little doubt that Welch shot him. My theory is that he found out that his uncle had discovered his connection with these bank burglaries and so killed him to avoid trouble for himself."

"It will do for a theory, but I am not prepared to endorse it, doctor. The seals I put on Col. McCauslan's desk remain unbroken, I suppose?"

"Yes; they are as you left them, as I promised you they should be last night."

"Very well. In a minute I will proceed to examine the contents of the desk. But further about this inner vault. Was anything taken beside the gold?"

"Why, no; and that is the singular part of it. There was seventy odd thousand dollars in that vault. It was found quite undisturbed."

"Strange! If the burglars had time to get out the gold, why didn't they take the cash?"

"That is what I have been asking myself since we got the vault open, but you must remember that Welch declares the gold was placed in the outer vault. I have no belief in his denial of knowledge of the secret spring. Mr. Brower, the former cashier, knew its working, and McCauslan told me Welch had the secret, too."

"Then why didn't he steal the cash?"

"Those boxes could not have been easily carried away by hand. Perhaps Welch was waiting for the return of the burglars to hand out the rest when his uncle suddenly came in upon him and met his death."

"Possibly."

"You don't believe it, however. I can tell by your tone."

"I am by no means convinced of the young man's

guilt, Doctor. Your reasoning is all based on the assumption that he is guilty. I am reasoning in various ways."

"I believe he killed his uncle."

"As you just said. But believe me, a man must have an open mind to succeed in detective work. However, we cannot tell. Meanwhile I will suggest that you put an expert on the bank books."

"You suggested that last night, you know."

"I know I did."

"Although I cannot believe that there is any earthly necessity for it, I have already engaged a man. He is at work now."

"Good! I will now proceed to examine the desk."

And Old King Brady went to work in his usual thorough manner.

Not a hole or corner of the handsome rolltop desk remained unsearched.

Not a letter, not even a scrap of paper escaped the old detective's practised eye.

But it was all to no purpose.

Nothing was discovered which seemed to have the least bearing on the mystery.

But yet from the first moment Old King Brady met Col. McCauslan he distrusted him.

The old detective's experience with human nature has been a wide one.

He inwardly put Col. McCauslan down for a crooked man, and it was a keen disappointment to him that he had now discovered nothing to prove his point.

Having finished his operations, Old King Brady sat for a few minutes contemplating the desk in silence.

Just then a clerk looked in.

"Mr. Dale would like to speak with you a minute, sir," he said.

"Who is Mr. Dale?" demanded Old King Brady. "I don't recall any clerk of that name."

"He is the expert," replied Dr. Baker, and he arose and left the room.

"Shut that door, Harry," breathed Old King Brady.

Harry stepped to the door of the director's room, and softly closed it.

As he turned he saw that his partner had pulled out all the little drawers and pigeon holes in the middle of the desk.

"Hello! Secret drawers!" he exclaimed.

"Hush!" said the old detective. "I don't want the doctor to catch on."

"You have caught on all right," whispered Harry.

"That's what I am here for. I saw through this ten minutes ago. I was wondering how I could get rid of that prejudiced man. Fortunately the chance came. Ha! What have we here?"

There was no true secret drawer revealed.

But behind the movable centre of the desk was a long narrow opening in which were several letters and a small account book.

These things Old King Brady promptly pocketed and restored the desk to its original position.

"Going to examine them?" demanded Harry, as his partner leaned back in his chair.

"No; wait. The doctor is liable to return at any minute."

They waited.

It was nearly a quarter of an hour before Dr. Baker re-entered the office.

His face was pale, and he seemed to be laboring under great excitement.

"Well, what now?" demanded Old King Brady.

"Enough," replied the doctor, hoarsely. "Mr. Brady, you were quite right. The books have been horribly falsified. I strongly suspect the bank is ruined; I know that I personally have lost many thousands. Securities which I entrusted to Col. McCauslan, have been hypothecated. Mr. Dale has but begun, and he has already discovered enough to open my eyes to the truth."

"That Col. McCauslan was a crook."

"Yes."

"I knew it from the moment I laid eyes on him; but, Doctor, he had no means of falsifying the books personally. There must be a confederate among the office force."

"It is indeed so. You were a week in the bank, you ought to have been able to size everyone up."

"And I think I have done so. If you will take my advice you will call James Wilson in here and put it up to him."

"Certainly, if you wish; but I want to say a word before I do so."

"Well?"

"That man is already on the verge of nervous collapse. He only keeps himself up by the use of stimulants."

"That looks bad."

"Perhaps after all McCauslan is innocent."

"Don't declare yourself, Doctor."

"But it was he who suggested hiring you. If he was guilty, why should he have done that?"

"For two reasons, as I read the riddle. First, the bank presidents felt that something ought to be done to unearth this bank burglars' league, if such an organization actually existed. McCauslan's suggestion was that I should put in a week in each prominent bank in Chicago. That was adopted. He wanted to have me first, and that was agreed upon, the why of it brings me to my second proposition."

"Well?"

"McCauslan for some mysterious reason was plotting against his nephew. When I came here he called me into this room and gave me a long lecture upon the young man's ingratitude, upon his dissipation and general evil course. He wanted to have him shadowed; also the girl whom he is engaged to marry. He openly hinted that he believed Welch to be an associate of burglars and other crooks."

"Is it so? You never mentioned this before."

"The time had not come. It has come now. I yielded to McCauslan. My partner here shadowed young Welch; another partner took Miss Rogers, his girl, in hand. Nothing, absolutely nothing against Welch, but we did learn that McCauslan himself was paying attention to Miss Rogers, who was formerly his stenographer, and

that in spite of her repeated refusals, was pressing her to become his wife."

"Can it be possible! McCauslan was no marrying man."

"Doubtless he had some deep motive for his action, and upon that motive this whole case hangs. But such are the facts. That Welch was in complete ignorance of them I am certain. You will have to change your opinion of that young man, Dr. Baker, believe me."

"It is changing now," replied the doctor. "Shall I call Wilson in?"

"I suppose it is best, although I should like to postpone it. The mere presence of this expert may drive him to flight."

And the bookkeeper was summoned into the private office.

He was a tall, cadaverous man.

As he entered his face was deathly white, and every nerve was twitching.

Guilt and fear were written all over his face.

"You wanted to see me, Dr. Baker?" he asked.

"Mr. Brady wants to see you," was the cold reply.

"Ah!" exclaimed Mr. Wilson. "Formerly Mr. Miles. Actually Old King Brady, the meddler, Old King Brady the spy. I might have known!"

"This young man is going to confess," thought the old detective. "There will be little difficulty here."

He was right.

But it was not to end up exactly as he imagined.

"Mr. Wilson," Old King Brady began in his mildest tone, "as you are aware, Col. McCauslan is dead. I wanted to ask you, among a few other things, how, in your estimation, he came to his death."

"If you want my personal opinion, sir," replied the bookkeeper, moistening his lips, "it is a case of suicide."

"Indeed! Then your theory would be that he took Dick Welch's pistol from the drawer in which it was kept and blew his brains out with the idea of throwing suspicion upon his nephew."

"Such is my belief."

"And why should he do such a thing?"

"Don't ask me."

"But I must ask you."

"Then all I can say is I don't know."

"But you do know that there were other reasons why Col. McCauslan should take his own life."

Instead of growing more nervous, the bookkeeper, strange to say, had grown calmer.

"Yes, I know that," he replied.

"For instance, that he had wrecked this bank, and that you were his accomplice?"

"Yes, sir," thundered Wilson, "but I want you to understand that he was the instigator of the whole business! That I was in his clutches, and had to yield. The bank is indeed wrecked. Thousands upon thousands have been sunk in reckless speculation, and Col. McCauslan did it all. I was only his tool, and he tried to dump me in the end."

"So! It is as bad as that then?"

"It is so bad that it could not be worse. Let your expert continue his work. Every hour will reveal more

rascality until the bottom is reached. As for me, I have had enough of it and propose to quit!"

And as he shouted these final words Mr. Wilson thrust his hand into the inside pocket of his coat, drawing out a revolver.

Old King Brady made a dive for him, and Harry jumped in, too.

Both were quick, but the bookkeeper was quicker.

"Good-day, gentlemen!" he shouted.

And before the detectives could stay his hand he pressed the revolver against his forehead and fired.

It was indeed good-day.

Bookkeeper Wilson dropped dead upon the floor.

CHAPTER VI.

THEORIES AND PLANS.

"I don't see where our pay is coming in on this case," remarked Young King Brady as he sat at dinner at the Sherman House with Alice and his chief that day.

"Especially now that the bank has gone to pieces," added Alice, "but I suppose if we succeed in recovering the Denver gold they will pay us something on that account."

"You two are talking without knowing the facts," replied the old detective. "The truth is, we are engaged by the Chicago Clearing House to trap this Bank Burglars' League, if such an institution has any existence outside of the imagination of Col. McCauslan. Our pay is secure."

"That's good news," said Harry. "Then it was the colonel who gave out the idea of the Bank Burglars' League?"

"No one else."

"Perhaps he knew. In the light of the happenings at the Nineteenth Bank, I should say that the man was pretty well posted in the ways and doings of Chicago crooks. But perhaps we shall know more on that subject, Governor, after you examine your find taken from the secret compartment of the colonel's desk."

"Which I propose to do right after dinner," was the reply.

Just then a letter, brought to the hotel by a district messenger, was handed to the old detective by the waiter.

It proved to be from the lawyer engaged by Old King Brady at his own expense to look after the interests of Dick Welch.

Only one sentence in it need be quoted. It read thus:

"I find upon questioning the young man that he neither visited Ada Rea's house nor replied to the letter."

"Well!" exclaimed Harry when he heard this, "now my theory of the 3-4-6-9 letter is borne out."

"Let us hear about that," remarked Alice. "I don't understand."

"Why, it is like this," said Harry. "I claimed from the first that the assault on Dick Welch in the park was a fake put up by his uncle. That the intention was to put a letter in his pocket which would serve to compromise him in some way, and that by mistake in his haste the fellow who bosses the job put the 3-4-6-9 letter in Welch's pocket instead, which was to have been mailed or personally delivered to Col. McCauslan."

"Very plausible," said Old King Brady, "I should not

be at all surprised if you were right, Harry. But wait until we have examined my desk find which, as you say, may throw some light on the affair."

They got down to it in Old King Brady's room a little later.

The old detective proceeded to empty his pockets, laid six letters and the little account book on the table.

Not until now had he found opportunity even to glance at them.

He took up the account book first.

Upon the flyleaf was written:

T. F. McC. in account with the B. P. A.

The body of the book was just a running account of things received and money paid.

The receipts were all indicated by initials.

It was hard to make out what was meant, but Old King Brady thought that some of the entries certainly referred to railroad and other bonds.

The opposite side was cash paid.

Clearly it indicated that Col. McCauslan had been selling things for the B. P. A.

Each cash entry was followed by one reading "Less commission."

The amount of this commission added to the entry on the credit side indicated that the colonel received a rakeoff of twenty-five percent. on these mysterious sales.

Finding that he was not likely to make much out of the book, Old King Brady tackled the letters.

He examined the addresses first in his usual methodical manner.

Knowing that it was utterly useless to try to hurry him, Harry and Alice sat quietly by.

"These addresses," said the old detective after a little, "are certainly all in the same hand, and that hand closely corresponds to the address on the 3-4-6-9 and the Ada Rea letter."

He produced these two envelopes and laid them on the table.

Both Harry and Alice admitted the resemblance.

Then the old detective deliberately opened the letters.

"At last," thought the impatient Harry.

But he still had to possess his soul in patience.

Old King Brady laid each enclosure down against its envelope as he took it out.

When this was done he began the unfolding process.

"2-10-9-6," he read off the first.

It was just these figures which occupied the sheet, and nothing else.

And it was so with each letter except one.

This bore date of only two weeks back.

It read as follows:

"You old rascal! If you don't come around, look for trouble. I have stood enough, and don't propose to stand any more. Then, you have turned me down for the last time. I shall be at Col. Dusty's to-night at nine. I expect to see you."

"Your friend or your enemy just as you want to have it." IKE SLOAN."

"Come!" cried the old detective, "here we have it at last!"

"Know him?" demanded Harry.

"Indeed I do. He is an old-time bank burglar whom I supposed to be dead years ago."

"Never heard of him."

"He dates back before your coming into the detective business."

"Is Ike Sloan his true name?"

"That no one knows. It is the name he always gave when cornered, however. He has done time in several prisons. He is known also as 'Big Ike,' as 'Dr. Mandeville,' as the 'Rev. Peter Crane,' and by other aliases. He used to be a particularly slick proposition. He was one of the best of the old time cracksmen, but he must now be well advanced in years. He was also an expert at the pen, by the way, and was once up for forgery. This writing is excellent, you see. It may be his."

"And these figure letters?" continued Harry.

"Go to prove that they are announcements of dates. Of the meetings of the B. P. A. perhaps."

"Burglary Promoting Association perhaps."

"Burglar's Protective Association," suggested Alice.

"Anything," added Old King Brady, "but now to see how these figures correspond with the postmarks. That may throw some light."

Old King Brady studied for a few minutes.

"It would seem so," he said.

"By taking the last figure first," added Harry.

"Yes. Take the Welch letter, as we will call it. The last figure is 9, September is the ninth month. It will be September first to-morrow. Jumping now to the first figure we have September third, or if you take the second figure September fourth. Then take the first and say third and we have six minutes past three A.M. or P.M."

"Rather far-fetched," remarked Harry.

"Far or near, one thing is certain," replied Old King Brady, "in each instance the last figure is very close to the date of the postmark, and always indicates either the current month or the one just ahead, as in the instance of the Welch letter, while the first figure is in each instance a low one. If that indicates an hour at night it would be a suitable hour for burglars to ply their trade."

"Sounds well," said Harry, "but if the fourth figure refers to the minutes past the hour as you say, it seems strange that the appointments should never have been put down for the even hour."

"True. That is certainly a weak point in my theory. But it may be a matter of superstition. As you well know, there is no man on earth so superstitious as your average crook. Perhaps Ike Sloan, if he had the making of these appointments, had some reason for never making them on the even hour."

"Ingenious reasoning, but not convincing."

"Quite so, but now I play my last card."

"Ah ha! I fancied you had an ace up your sleeve."

"It belongs to the pack, my dear boy. I have dealt fairly."

And Old King Brady took from his wallet a memorandum scrawled upon the back of an envelope.

"Counting the Welch, we have six of these figure letters now," he said. "Let us see. This is a list of the various bank burglaries which have occurred in and around Chicago, with their dates. To begin with we

have the Hardware Manufacturers' Bank, which was burglarized on June tenth, and here we have in this letter a string of four figures ending in 6—June according to my theory, and the figures 10 occur. The next is the Drovers' Bank, entered March ninth. This letter ends in 3, March according to my theory, and as was the case with the 10 in the letter I have just laid down the second figure is 9."

"Really, it begins to look as if you had hit it!" cried Alice.

It did indeed.

Old King Brady continued his comparisons.

In each instance the last figure corresponded to the month and the second to the day of the month on which a bank burglary had been committed.

The Welch letter appeared to refer to some burglary yet to be pulled off.

Even Harry had to admit that the theory was greatly strengthened by Old King Brady's last card.

"But enough of theorizing," exclaimed the old detective at last. "Now for plans. I understand that this Ada Rea's is not closed to women. It is not what you would call a regular gambling house in the full sense of the word, although it amounts to the same thing. It is a place where women meet and play bridge, and men play bridge and poker on the lower floor. Upstairs there is a roulette wheel and faro tables, to which women are not admitted. Of course no woman is admitted without an escort. The place is run on the strictest lines, and is devoted solely to games of chance. A supper is served at midnight, and the door is closed at one in the morning, at which hour everyone is supposed to leave."

"You appear to have got it down fine," said Harry. "Is it to be my job to look this place over?"

"Your's and Alice's. Go representing Welch. Ask for Miss Rea's help for him, and see what comes of it. The chances are against it amounting to anything, but you cannot tell."

"And you?" Harry asked.

"Oh, I am going gunning for Big Ike Sloan," replied Old King Brady. "But he is a wary bird, and whether I am able to bring him off his perch or not remains to be seen."

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOINGS OF MR. OLIVER WAINWRIGHT.

Ada Rea's was all that Old King Brady had painted it, and more:

We say more because it was unique of its kind, and for elegance of furnishing and the care in its management no gambling house in the country ever excelled it—probably none ever will.

Here met all classes of people who had "money to burn."

It was supposed to be necessary to be personally introduced to Mrs. Rea before one could come in under her hospitable roof.

Doubtless this was so at the start, but the rule was laxly observed at the time of which we write, and any

high roller whose appearance bore him out as one having money could effect an entrance providing he spoke the colored doorkeeper fair.

On the evening of the day the Bradys held their conference at the Sherman House, Mrs. Rea's private bridge and poker club was running full blast at half-past eight, although only thirty minutes had elapsed since the opening hour.

If it was true, as Old King Brady had stated, that Mrs. Rea was dying of cancer, then the sporting world was in ignorance of the fact.

Certainly the woman, or someone representing her, nightly appeared in the brilliantly lighted parlors at No. — Michigan avenue, and she was very much in evidence this evening.

"Mrs. Rea" everyone called her.

In full evening dress she received newcomers as they were announced by a liveried servant, who ushered them into the reception room.

It was "Mrs. Rea" who escorted the ladies to the card tables and chatted with the gentlemen before they passed into the poker room.

With those who went upstairs to the more private rooms where faro and roulette were on she had nothing to do apparently.

These were privileged characters.

Only those personally known to "Mrs. Rea" were allowed to ascend to the secret precincts above.

At nine o'clock a stylish young man in full evening dress, accompanied by a lady, alighted from an automobile and ascended the steps.

Whatever was said to the doorkeeper the pair were promptly admitted, and the butler passed them along to the reception room.

"Mrs. Rea?" demanded the young man, encountering the lady of the Bridge and Poker Club.

She acknowledged her identity, and a card was handed to her.

It bore the name "Mr. Oliver Wainwright."

"May I have a word in private with you?" Mr. Wainwright asked.

"Upon what subject?" was demanded.

The young man leaned forward and whispered something in her ear.

Mrs. Rea started and looked at him curiously.

"Are you sure you wish to see me in the interests of that gentleman?" she asked.

"Quite sure, if you are Mrs. Ada Rea."

"I am Mrs. Rea, as I told you."

"And it is as I have just told you."

"And the lady?"

"Will wait here. She knows nothing of the matter."

Mrs. Rea hesitated.

It was only for an instant, however.

"I will see you in a few minutes," she said.

Then calling to the liveried butler, she added:

"Rufus, show this gentleman to No. 5."

With an immense air of dignity the butler led the way upstairs to the sacred precincts above.

Here he opened the door of a small but elegantly furnished room, and placing a chair, retired.

It was a longer wait than Mr. Wainwright had antici-

pated, but at last Mrs. Rea came flashing her diamonds into the room.

If her manner had been cold before, it was icy now.

"Really, Mr. Wainwright, I cannot imagine what you may have to say to me," she said. "I have no acquaintance with Mr. Richard Welch, and beyond the fact that I see by the papers that such a person has been arrested for the murder of his uncle, Col. McCauslan, the president, I should not even have recognized the name."

"Pardon me," replied Mr. Wainwright. "There may be some mistake, but I scarcely think so. A few days since my friend Welch received a very remarkable letter signed by your name, making him a business offer. That letter I have seen."

"Ah!"

"Mr. Welch is my closest friend."

"Indeed."

"He was on the point of calling upon you, Mrs. Rea, when this calamity struck him."

"Is it so?"

"Yes. And now that this misfortune has come upon him he sends for me. He wants to say that he has seen you on the street, and that he admires you greatly. That he is penniless, and without friends who can help him. He beseeches your help if you admire him to the extent your letter states."

Mrs. Rea listened to this with a sarcastic smile.

"And what about his good friend, Mr. Oliver Wainwright?" she asked.

"He is powerless to help him. Mr. Oliver Wainwright possesses neither money nor influence. He comes to you as a last resort."

"And his appeal is in vain. What I might have thought when that letter was written, and what I think now are two different things. Mr. Welch must appeal elsewhere."

"Circumstances have changed."

"Decidedly."

"But——"

But it was written in the book of fate that this conversation was to proceed no further.

What cards Mr. Oliver Wainwright would have played with this queen of cards and diamonds can never be known.

For just then a heavy pounding, followed by a crash, was heard below.

Then came a rush of many feet and a loud voice shouted.

"Everyone in this house is under arrest."

"Oh, great heaven!" gasped Mrs. Rea. "This will kill her!"

She rushed out of the room.

Mr. Wainwright followed.

Out through three doors men in evening dress came flocking.

Through the more open doors others, hastily gathering up gambling apparatus, were seen.

Policemen and plainclothesmen were in the hall, the front door had been battered down, officers were flocking into the room below and upstairs.

In short, the notorious Bridge and Poker Club, with its faro and roulette annex, had been pulled.

Some of the upstairs gamblers escaped by the roof, others were captured.

Downstairs all the male bridge and poker players were gathered in, but the ladies were not disturbed.

Mr. Oliver Wainwright, like a true gentleman, started for the lady he had left behind him.

But he was intercepted on the stairs by a plainclothes-man, who placed him under arrest.

Something was said in a whisper.

Mr. Wainwright slightly threw back the lapel of his dress coat and displayed something in the way of a shield.

"That don't go, young feller," sneered the plainclothes-man. "That won't work with me."

There was further protest, but it availed nothing.

The lady who had entered the house with Mr. Wainwright started to interfere, but suddenly pulled back when the arrested man gave a peculiar gesture with his left hand, which might have been a secret sign.

The end of it, so far as he was concerned, was that he was bundled into a patrol wagon with several others and driven away.

Now Mr. Wainwright's next neighbor in the wagon was a man who had been captured in the second hall, just coming out of the faro room.

He was a light complexioned, rather good looking fellow, but had a weak face and seemed very nervous over the affair.

"Gee!" he whispered to Wainwright. "I don't know what I am going to do if they lock us up! I've got a most important engagement to-night."

"We are all in the same boat, Mr. Spence," was the quiet reply.

There was silence for a moment.

The man addressed was looking hard at Mr. Wainwright.

"What do you call me that for?" he whispered at last.

"Because that is your name."

"Who was telling you?"

"Don't you remember me?"

"Not on your life. I never seen you before."

"Yes, you did, once."

"Where—where?"

"In little old New York."

"Little old New York, as you call it, is a big burg."

"Don't you remember the night I was introduced to you in Billy McGroaty's, on Sixth avenue?"

"No. By who?"

"I forgot his name, but I don't forget the night. Never could. It was about three years ago. I had only just come down from up the river, where I had been stopping in the Hotel de Sing Sing for a couple of years. I met this guy on the train. We landed in at McGroaty's a little after midnight. There I was introduced to you, and we had several drinks together. It is not so strange that you forgot me, for you had had one or two before."

"I don't remember."

"But I do."

"What's my full name?"

"Jack Spence. But never mind. If you don't want to remember me I don't care."

"It isn't that. I actually don't; all the same I used

to go into McGroaty's right along in them days. What brought you out here?"

"Oh, I blew in here about six months ago."

"What's your lay?"

"Never mind. I don't want to talk here any more. It isn't safe."

Jack Spence lowered his voice.

"No, but tell a feller," he said. "It's kind of like company to find a man who knows little old New York as well as you seem to."

"Well, my present business is a little of everything," replied Wainwright, in the same low whisper. "What I went up for was cracking a safe in Harlem."

"So?"

"Yes."

"Who's your side partner?"

"If you were I wouldn't give you away to a comparative stranger—why should I tell? Anyway, he is doing time now."

"I never seen you at the club before."

"No, and I wasn't there to play to-night, either. I had business with Mrs. Rea."

"Really Mrs. Rea?"

"What do you mean by really Mrs. Rea?"

"That shows you are not wise to the game."

"To show you that I am wise to the game, let me tell you that really Mrs. Rea is dying of cancer, and that the woman I had business with simply personates her."

Spence laughed shortly.

"I guess you are all right," he said. "But what's your name?"

"I go by the name of Wainwright. Oliver Wainwright; but enough of this talk. Know why I spoke to you?"

"No. You have me guessing."

"Well, it was for two reasons. First, because I really did remember you. Second, because I have a little pull of my own in Chi. I can get right out of this now—to-night, and if you want it so, I can get you off with me."

"Really?"

"Yes, really."

"Who's yer friends?"

"Never you mind. Do you want it so?"

"Sure thing. Like I told yer, I have an important engagement to-night, and I don't want to miss it. You will be doing me a great big favor if you can get me off."

"Well," replied Mr. Wainwright, "we shall see."

At the station the prisoners were lined up.

Their fictitious names and addresses were taken, and all, with one exception, were sent to cells.

Mr. Wainwright and Jack Spence were not locked up together.

In fact Mr. Wainwright was the exception.

Present at the station was the chief of police, who had personally ordered the raid.

It was observed by the captain who pulled Mrs. Rea's place that his superior officer looked hard at young Wainwright while he was being examined.

Then the chief leaned over and whispered something. Perhaps this was the reason why Mr. Wainwright, who

was led down to the cells, was promptly led back again and ushered into a private office where sat the chief.

He looked at the young man quizzically.

"Well, what does this mean?" he demanded.

"Means that your man refused to recognize my shield," was the reply.

"If one refused, there were others. The captain would not have refused."

"I didn't ask him."

"Why not?"

"Because at the same instant I recognized in another prisoner a man I wanted to get next to, and as luck would have it, I was put next to him in the patrol wagon. It saved me from wanting to go into a cell."

The chief laughed.

"You are all right, Harry," he said. "How is Old King Brady, and why hasn't he been to see me? I hear you are working on the McCauslan murder case?"

"Yes, and we have been very busy. But can I have my man?"

"Can I refuse Young King Brady any reasonable request? You certainly can have your man."

And the chief called the captain and the word was passed to set "John Smith" free.

And John Smith was as surely Jack Spence as Mr. Oliver Wainwright was Young King Brady.

Ten minutes later, when the bank burglar—for as such Harry had recognized Spence—came out upon the sidewalk in front of the station he found "Oliver Wainwright" awaiting him.

"Say, you are the whole cheese!" he exclaimed, delightedly. "How in the world did you do it?"

"Oh, that's my pull. The police here in Chi don't hold me."

"What's to pay?"

"Not a cent."

"Oh, come now. You're too liberal."

"Pshaw! A New Yorker in trouble! What do you take me for?"

"At least come and have a drink."

"That goes."

They went.

It was a chance, of course.

At all events Young King Brady had got next to a bank burglar.

Question was, did Jack Spence belong to the so-called Bank Burglars' League?

CHAPTER VIII.

ALICE MAKES A DISCOVERY AND TUMBLES INTO TROUBLE.

The lady left behind at Mrs. Rea's was Alice, of course.

She remained in the reception room while the bridge playing women flocked out of the house.

For Alice had received a secret sign from her partner, of which the Bradys have a regular code.

This sign read:

"Hold on. You may pick up points."

So Alice held on.

The pompous butler had been pulled in with the others and the colored doorkeeper had fled.

Some gambling material was carried away in a cart, and then the police retired.

Apparently the house was deserted.

It was wonderful what a change had suddenly come over the place.

Seeing no opportunity of doing any good by remaining longer, Alice was about to pull out when suddenly she heard light footsteps descending the stairs.

It proved to be the woman who had for many weeks been personating the notorious Ada Rea, and so cleverly had she managed this, being an actress by profession, as Alice subsequently learned, that none of the gamblers of both sexes who frequented the Bridge and Poker Club suspected that she was not Mrs. Rea, save a few chosen ones who were in the secret.

"What! You still here?" exclaimed the woman in surprise. "What are you doing here anyhow? There is nothing left to steal."

"And if your parlor was full of diamonds they would be safe as far as I am concerned," replied Alice. "I am no thief."

The woman gave a half sneering laugh.

"Perhaps!" she cried. "I don't know, and I don't care. So long as you are here perhaps—but no matter. Why did you stay behind?"

"Because the gentleman I came with told me to."

"You came with Mr. Wainwright?"

"Yes."

"What did he tell you to stay behind for? He was arrested, wasn't he?"

"Yes. Perhaps he expected to get off and come back after me."

"Has he a pull?"

"I don't know."

"So? Then you can't be very well acquainted with him."

"Never mind. If you don't want me here, I will go away."

Wait!"

The woman swept out of the room.

She looked scared and displayed much nervousness.

Alice heard her go down into the basement.

In a moment she came running upstairs again."

"Look here? What's your name?" she demanded.

"Alice Ludlum."

"Miss Ludlum, I am in a great deal of trouble."

"Have the police——"

"Oh, it is not that. Listen! I suppose you take me for Mrs. Rea?"

"Mr. Wainwright said you were."

"He knows nothing about it. I am not. My name is Maggie Zeller. I am alone in this house with a dying woman, and that woman is Mrs. Rea."

"Is that so? I heard that Mr. Rea was very rich; but——"

"So he is. He is dying, too, but he is in the hospital. Mrs. Rea is upstairs. This excitement has about finished her. It seems to me that she is liable to go at any moment. There isn't a servant in the house."

"And you want me to go for a doctor?"

"Will you let me finish, Miss Ludlum? No; a doctor can do no good. The woman is dying of cancer. We had a trained nurse with her right along, but she got on her ear to-night and quit; another was expected, but she hasn't shown up. I am at my wits ends. Mrs. Rea wants something. I can't make out what it is. Will you come up to her room with me? Perhaps you can."

"Certainly," replied Alice. "If I can be of any assistance to you, I shall be only too glad."

"Come then," said Miss Zeller, and Alice followed her upstairs to the top floor.

Here in an elegantly furnished bedroom the dying woman lay.

She was a person under forty, and in her day had evidently been a beauty, but now it was evident enough that she was almost gone.

She was sleeping when they entered the room.

Alice bent over her, as did Miss Zeller.

The unfortunate woman seemed scarcely to breathe.

"Why, she is practically dead now!" remarked Alice.

"Do you think so? And I all alone with her here! Oh, this is terrible. They give her a hard name, Miss Ludlum, but she has been very good to me. Just now she was trying to tell me something. I couldn't make out what it was, and the poor soul did seem to be troubled about it. Stay with me till she revives or dies. Even to have a stranger here is better than being alone."

"Certainly I will stay," replied Alice, and she removed her hat and sacque.

They sat by the bedside for half an hour or more talking in low tones.

And still the dying woman slept on.

But the end was not yet.

At last she opened her eyes and faintly murmured:

"Here I am, Ada!" cried Miss Zeller, going to her.

"I am going."

"I am afraid you are, dear. Do you want the doctor?"

"No, n-o! He can't help me. I want—"

The words trailed off into an unintelligible murmur.

"That is the way it was before," said Miss Zeller. "Oh if I could only understand."

"Let me try," said Alice.

But Mrs. Rea would not have it.

She roused up and said:

"No, no! Maggie!"

"Well dear? Try and speak."

"Who is she?"

"She is just here to keep me company, dear."

"Maggie! Lean down! I want to whisper."

"I'll go out of the room," said Alice, and she passed into the front chamber.

It was an elegantly furnished as the bedroom.

Here were many framed photographs, mostly of men.

As Alice glanced from one to another she was able to pick out an excellent one of Bunker McCauslan.

Evidently the dead man had been a friend of Ada Rea's.

Just then Miss Zeller came hurrying from the bedroom.

"I know what she wants," she said, "and it is going to

take me to the other end of town. I am afraid she will die before I can get back again. It is too late to call her automobile. I'm sure I don't know what to do!"

"Is it important?"

"Well, yes. In a certain sense it is. But what I am thinking of is doing what my friend wishes me to in her last moments."

"Can't I go?"

"I am afraid it wouldn't be of any use. She wants to see a certain person who would not come here for you, I am afraid. Indeed I am not at all sure that she will consent to come for me."

"I will do whatever you say."

"Then stay here with her, and I will go."

"Very well."

"I shall be as quick as I can, but I don't believe I can be back under an hour."

"I will stay until you come back anyway."

And Miss Zeller hastily prepared to leave.

Just before she started she said:

"Now, Miss Ludlum, there is just one thing I want to say to you. There may come here while I am gone a tall man with one eye gone. If he does come, he will come secretly—so suddenly that you will wonder where he came from. I can't explain further, but what I want to say is speak him fair. He is a dangerous man. You will pretend that you are the new nurse. Remember, you know nothing of me except that I have gone out, and you don't know when I am going to return."

"Suppose he insists upon seeing Mrs. Rea?"

"You can do nothing. He is her husband's brother. He will surely make you trouble if you attempt to stand in his way."

And with this warning Miss Zeller left.

It was now getting on towards midnight.

Time had passed more quickly than Alice had realized.

She looked in upon the dying woman, who appeared to be asleep.

Alice now improved the opportunity to make a thorough examination of Mrs. Rea's private sitting room, as the outer chamber seemed to be.

But she found nothing which threw any light on the case.

She was thus engaged when she heard the woman faintly calling, and hurried into the bedroom.

"Maggie! Maggie, I am going now! Quick!" Mrs. Rea gasped.

Alice ran to her.

"Shall I raise you up?" she asked, seeing that Mrs. Rea evidently mistook her for Miss Zeller.

"No, no!" was the reply. "The will! Buck will get it—he will destroy it! Third drawer! Cheffonier—pull—"

She never finished her sentence.

Her eyes closed and her head rolled over.

Alice saw at a glance that Ada Rea was dead. But this she could not help.

Everyone must die.

Alice is all business.

Perhaps the woman's will might in some way serve her purpose. She determined to examine it at least.

So she went to the handsome cheffonier which stood against the wall on the other side of the room and pulled open the third drawer.

To her surprise, for Mrs. Rea's speech had been very plain, there was nothing in the drawer but a few articles of clothing.

"Her mind was wandering," thought Alice as she closed the drawer. "I wonder who Buck is, and what there is about this will."

"Pull!"

This had been the last spoken word.

But pull what?

Naturally one would have supposed that it was the drawer Mrs. Rea wanted pulled open.

But perhaps it was actually something else.

Alice examined the brass knobs upon the drawer.

They were rather peculiar, with big round heads and long slim shanks.

Alice pulled upon the left hand knob of the third drawer.

It shot forward a little and there was a slight click.

She pulled at the right hand knob.

To her surprise she now found that the drawer was locked and refused to budge.

"Odd," thought Alice.

She pulled with both knobs.

The drawer came out readily enough, and with it came another, a narrow wooden box of a thing on the left. It seemed to have been set in the wall behind the cheffonier. It was attached to the drawer by a slender wire.

And in that box were several articles in the way of diamond jewelry.

Also a folded paper which had a legal look.

Alice picked up the paper and read:

"Last will and testament of Ada Rea."

She opened it and hastily ran her eye down the page.

What was it she saw which made her give a sudden exclamation and hide the will about her dress?

Surely it must have been something of importance to call for such quick action.

Leaving the jewelry undisturbed, Alice pushed the third drawer and the secret annex back into place.

Pushing the left hand knob it moved in slightly.

Alice pulled out the drawer again.

The annex was no longer attached.

"This is all right," she murmured. "Can it be—"

But before she could complete her sentence she was startled by seeing the portieres suddenly thrown aside by a tall man with a particularly forbidding face.

His left eye had been removed, which made him uglier still.

"Well! Who are you? The new nurse?" he demanded.

"Yes," replied Alice. "What do you want? Mrs. Rea is dead!"

"Dead! The mischief! When did she die?"

"Just a few minutes ago."

"Where is Miss Zeller?"

"She went out nearly an hour ago, and left me in charge."

"So? And that is her love for her darling Ada! To desert her in her dying moments. The usual way."

"You are entirely mistaken, sir. She went on an errand at Mrs. Rea's special request."

"Did Mrs. Rea say anything before she died?"

"Only a few muttered words."

The one-eyed man strode towards the bed, and looked down upon the dead woman.

Then he looked at Alice fixedly.

"Go into the other room!" he said. "Don't you attempt to leave the house."

"Who are you to order me about?"

"Who am I? Well, I am Mr. Rea's brother. Now that my sister-in-law is dead I shall take charge here."

"Oh, I see."

Alice started to leave the room.

She had not yet reached the portieres when she was suddenly seized by both shoulders and whirled violently around.

"Ha, you beauty!" cried the one-eyed man, thrusting his ugly face close to hers. "You're my girl! Give me up that paper you stole from the secret drawer!"

CHAPTER IX.

AT COL. DUSTY'S.

Down on the Levee, somewhere near State and Polk streets, Colonel Dusty's famous all-night house was doing its usual rushing trade on the night Ada Rea breathed her last.

At Col. Dusty's the thirsty ones could get a drink at any time, night or day.

True, the big saloon in front was supposed to close its doors at one A.M., but behind the tier of barrels was a private room, long and narrow, to which after that hour the initiated found ready entrance by way of the alley door.

It was like the old House of David.

Go behind Col. Dusty's barrels after midnight and you would find drunks lying about on the floor in every direction.

They were expected to drink while their money lasted, but they were never turned out till morning.

Many of Col. Dusty's customers lived exclusively on whisky or beer and free lunch, and had no other bed than the colonel's floor.

It was the same on this particular night as on every other night.

Mike, the night "barkeep," closed the State street door and put out the light as usual.

Then getting back behind the barrels, he started business there.

At about a quarter to two a tall, elderly man came in by the alley door.

He was stylishly dressed, and he wore a big silk muffler about his neck, while with his left hand he pressed a handkerchief against his face in such a way as to conceal not only his cheek, but the left eye.

"Mike," he said, walking up to the bar rather unsteadily. "Give me a little whisky and give me the key."

"Great Scott, Doc!" breathed the bartender. "What's dis? I heard you was pinched."

"And so I was. But prison bars can't hold me."

"What's de matter? Got a toot ache?"

"Yes. It aches me like sin."

"But how did you git out. De colonel was telling me about the way you was took dis afternoon."

"Great heavens, Mike! What do you want to bother a suffering man for? Isn't it enough that I have had all the trouble I have to-day without being bored over it, when I'm almost mad with pain. Give me the whisky and the key."

"Youse has got a grouch on for fair, Doc. Well, I don't wonder. De colonel will be glad to hear of dis."

The whisky was served, and a key handed out.

"Doc," known at Col. Dusty's as "Doctor Mandeville," then opened a door at the end of the night room and started up a flight of stairs.

A light burned in the little square hall away at the top of the stairs.

Doe, who had taken particular pains to close the door, now stood still, looking around.

Perhaps it was the liquor he had partaken of which confused him.

Certain it is, however, that he did not seem to know which room was his.

He softly tiptoed to a door and tried the key.

It failed to work.

He tried it in another door.

Same result.

There were four doors opening off from this hall, and each had a different style of lock.

Nor was this strange, if rumor had it straight.

For among Chicago police circles it was generally understood that Col. Dusty's upstairs rooms were rented out to crooks whose business it was to lie quiet for awhile.

Honor among thieves is all very well for a popular saying, but thieves as a rule do not care to have other thieves prying into their private retreats—hence the difference in Col. Dusty's locks.

At last when he tackled the third door Doctor Mandeville's key turned, and he passed into a dirty little den of a room.

There had been some excitement that afternoon when a detective and two officers suddenly descended upon Col. Dusty's and demanded Doctor Mandeville.

The colonel at first stoutly denied the man's presence in his snug harbor upstairs, but the officers would take no denial, and pushing on, found their man and carried him off.

And now here he was back again, it seemed.

No wonder Mike, who only knew of the affair by hearsay, was surprised.

Carefully locking the door behind him, Doe proceeded to light the gas.

He stood for a moment surveying the room, and then undressed in part and got into bed.

It is to be hoped that he slept well, for he had an early caller.

It was but a little after five o'clock when a slim man, who looked as if he might be dying of consumption, came sliding in at the alley door.

Mike was half asleep behind the bar, and the floor was well strewn with customers with never a pillow on which to rest their weary heads.

But they did not seem to care.

Among the whole bunch there was not one single kicker.

The fact is, every man jack of them was dead drunk and fast asleep.

Mike nodded to the slim man with an air of mingled familiarity and respect.

"How are you, Mr. Ivory?" he asked. "Looking for Doc?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I've got an appointment with him."

"S'pose you heard the news?"

"What news?"

"Doc was pinched yesterday afternoon."

"Gee! You don't mean it! No! I've heard nothing. You know I have to keep tight."

"So I understand. Yes, de bulls came for Doe, and took him away."

"On what charge?"

"I don't know. I wasn't here, and all I know is what the colonel told me."

"Well, well, well! That's bad enough! I suppose now I shall have to jump the town."

"Dunno nothin' about your biz, Mr. Ivory. I was only tellin' you. But why should you jump the town?"

"Never mind. Give us some whisky. The best, mind. I don't want any of your blame forty-rod such as you serve to these dead ones."

Mike laughed and took a special bottle from the back bar.

Shrewd man Mike!

Good man for Col. Dusty to have around—perhaps!

For "Mr. Ivory" was quite in the habit of keeping these early morning appointments with Doctor Mandeville, and he made it a rule never to drink when he had one on hand.

So Mike, who was gunning for fifteen cents in the interest of his boss, of course, concealed part of the truth.

Having now secured the nickel and the dime, in a fit of absent-mindedness, he dropped the coins into his own pocket and went on to tell the rest.

"But he got out again," continued Mike, leaning his elbows on the bar.

"Who got out?" demanded the consumptive, who seemed to be already affected by what he had drank. "Doc!"

"The deuce you say! And where is he now?"

"Upstairs in bed. He came in just before two o'clock."

"Mike, you're a fraud!" cried Mr. Ivory, angrily. "Here you go searing the wits out of a feller, and then you let me take a drink when you know I never touch a drop when I want to talk business with Doc. Since I am sick, the least bit of whisky makes me soggy, as I've told you time and again."

"Sorry," grinned Mike. "You asked for it while I was a-tellin' you de story, and, of course, I am here to sell de booze."

"Aw, go chase yourself," growled Mr. Ivory, and pass-

ing through the inner door he ascended to the regions above.

Evidently he knew just where he was going, even if Dr. Mandeville did not, for he rapped hard on the correct door.

Immediately someone called out: "That you, Jim?"

"Yes."

"Hold on till I open the door."

It was dark in the room, and the gas in the hall was turned down low.

The door was quickly closed on Mr. Ivory, and "Doc" crawled back into bed.

Mr. Ivory struck a match.

"What are you going to do?"

"Light the gas."

"Don't. It makes my eyes ache. We can talk in the dark. When did you come down from Milwaukee?"

"I just got in. I came straight here."

"Well?"

"I hear you were pinched yesterday?"

"Yes."

"What's the matter? You talk different."

"I've got a cold."

"A bad one, I should say."

"Don't worry. It's my cold, not yours."

"But about this pinch business."

"Well, I was pinched, that's all. The chief got on to me somehow. He just wanted to know if it was really me, I suppose. Asked me a lot of questions, and then along about midnight they let me go. There isn't anything in it."

"Did he question you about the league?"

"Never mentioned it."

"About McCauslan?"

"Never alluded to him once."

"Blame strange what they wanted you for."

"Oh, it's the old business. Of course I suppose I ought to have reported, but I didn't. I've got a long record, Jim. It was enough to make them suspicious when they found out I was in town."

"You didn't see nothing of the Bradys?"

"Not a thing. But get down to tacks. What's the word?"

"3-4-6-9 will have to be changed."

"Who says so?"

"Buck wired me. Says, with the Bradys hanging around it will have to be changed to 3-2-6-9."

"So? Then that spells—"

Just here Doc was seized with a violent fit of coughing.

Mr. Ivory finished out the sentence for him.

"Spells to-night, of course."

"All right. So much the better. With this hanging over me, I want to pull out."

"If Buck divides fair we ought to be all able to pull out."

"He will! He'll have to. I'd like to see him try it any other way."

"I hear Ada is very low. Jack went to see her to-night."

"Didn't you hear the news? But, of course, you didn't, since that you were in Milwaukee."

"No, what?"

"Ada's was pulled last night."

"The deuce you say! While Jack was there?"

"Yes."

"Was he took?"

"Yes, but he managed to get loose."

"And Ada? I should think the shock would have been enough to kill her. I didn't hear. All I know is no women were pulled in."

"I must go around and see her after breakfast."

There was silence.

The conversation sagged.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Doc. "What did you turn off the talk for?"

"Gee, I'm half soggy. That mut of a barkeep made me drink whisky. You know how little I can stand. But say, Doc, I have nothing more to talk about, anyway. Hain't you coming to the meeting?"

"Sure."

"Then why don't you get up and dress? It will be too late."

"Let's see, what time is it?"

"About half-past five. You know we have to be on hand by six."

"Of course. Well, you get downstairs. I'll join you in a few minutes. Better not put in any more booze."

"You bet I won't! If Buck catches me any way boozy there's always the deuce to pay."

And with this "Mr. Ivory" immediately arose and left the room.

Doc crawled out of bed and lighted the gas as soon as he had gone.

Going to his coat, he took out a small case.

There proved to be paints and little brushes in it.

Probably Doc was more than ever anxious now to avoid recognition as Ike Sloan, alias Big Ike, alias Dr. Mandeville, alias the Rev. Peter Crane, for he proceeded to doctor his face.

Particularly attentive was he to his left eye.

When he had finished there was a heavy dark discoloration beneath it, and the lower lid appeared to have sagged somewhat.

He now dressed and went downstairs.

Mr. Ivory was talking to Mike, who asked:

"How's your toothache, Doc?"

"It's better," was the hoarse reply, "but the blame cell they locked me up in was damp, and I've caught a beast of a cold."

And with that Doc and Mr. Ivory passed out through the alley door.

CHAPTER X.

ALICE SOLVES THE WHOLE MYSTERY.

It cannot be said that Alice was taken altogether by surprise.

She expected trouble with the one-eyed man, and it had come.

She feared lest he might have been watching her through the portieres, and it appeared that he had.

But she had not heard him come up behind her, and thus far she was taken unawares.

"Unhand me!" she cried. "You are no gentleman. That's what's the matter with you!"

And this rebuke, sternly spoken, may have had its effect.

At all events the man did let go of her.

Alice pulled out the will and handed it over to him. She knew that it would be simply impossible for her to stand out against him.

To pretend to yield was the only way.

The man opened the document and started to look at it.

Alice remained motionless.

This would have been an opportunity to escape, perhaps, if she had been inclined to avail herself of it.

But Alice was not thinking about herself just then.

She was determined, for the sake of another, not to go without at least making an effort to rescue the will.

The one-eyed man made the best use he could of his solitary optic.

Holding the paper close up, he proceeded to study the will.

He did not read it all through, however, but having reached a certain point, he folded up the paper and put it in his pocket.

"I saw what you did!" he said, with a hideous leer at Alice. "What made you do it—say?"

"What made I do what?"

"Go for this will in the secret drawer?"

"Because Mrs. Rea ordered me to with her dying breath."

"Huh, huh! What were you going to do with the will?"

Alice laughed.

"Perhaps I'm on the make," she retorted. "Perhaps I saw that there was a chance to make something out of that document which you seem to be so anxious to get."

"Or thought you did."

"Just so."

"What's your name?"

"Ludlum."

"Got a handle to it, I suppose?"

"Sure. What's yours?"

"Never you mind about me. You happen to be entirely in my power. I can make things warm for you if I choose. What's your first name?"

"Oh, well, it's Alice, if you must know."

"Alice! A pretty name! Well, Alice, you are all right as a nurse, no doubt, but the trouble with you is you are a little bit too grasping. You have seen something which for your own sake I wish you hadn't."

"What do you mean by that speech?"

"I mean that I shall have to take you home with me, Birdie, and hold you in a gilded cage for a little while till I get a chance to turn myself. Still, I am going to be good to you, for you have done me a great service. Again and again I have searched for that will, but never could find it. I shan't forget that you found it for me when we come to have a reckoning. Just open that secret drawer again."

"Come, I am on to your curves. You propose to close in on those diamonds."

"Sure thing. Perhaps I may be tempted to give some of them to you, Birdie, if you are good."

Seeing that there was no help for it, Alice opened the secret drawer.

The diamond jewelry contained in it was nothing of any great value, a matter of between two and three thousand dollars perhaps.

The one-eyed man ran it over hastily.

"Good enough!" he muttered. "Seems to be all straight goods. Didn't know but Ada had snaked out a lot of the diamonds and put in fake stones. These for mine, Birdie. So you see you have done me another good turn."

"You will be under too heavy obligations even to be able to repay me if you keep on," replied Alice, sarcastically.

"Oh, I'll be able to square up," laughed the one-eyed man. "I pay my debts, Birdie, and don't you forget it."

He had stowed away the jewelry by this time, and he now pushed past Alice into the other room, calling her to follow him, which she did.

And now she saw that a secret panel stood open in the left hand wall.

Beyond was a narrow passageway leading through to the next house.

"So? This is the way you sneak in and out," sneered Alice.

"This is the way, Birdie. Sneak in. Hark! What noise is that?"

"Someone coming upstairs, I should say. Probably Miss Zeller returning."

"Right you are, and I don't want to meet her. Through with you!"

He gently pushed Alice through the opening, and following, closed the secret panel.

A few seconds later Miss Zeller, accompanied by a younger woman, entered the room.

It would have interested Alice surely if she could have remained behind to see.

For Miss Zeller's companion was none other than Miss Teenie Rogers, cousin to Ada Rea!

But it would have been no surprise to Alice to see the girl.

She had already seen Mrs. Rea's will, and she knew that it cut off her dying husband with a maintenance and bequeathed the dead woman's entire fortune to her cousin.

Now Alice understood why Bunker McCauslan had been so bent upon marrying his former typewriter.

It appeared perfectly plain to her what the motive for the plot against Dick Welch was.

For McCauslan probably knew all about the will, and had no notion of allowing his nephew to step into such a good thing by marrying the woman of his choice.

Once in the adjoining house, Buck Rea, or "One-eyed Buck," to use the name by which this man was commonly known, took Alice by the arm and ran her rapidly along a carpeted hall to a rear room.

"Ia with you, Birdie," he said. "Make yourself comfortable. Have no fear of anyone bothering you before morning, so go to bed and sleep in peace."

Thus saying, Buck closed the door and turned the key. There was a light in the hall, but the room was dark.

"I'm up against it!" thought Alice. "Thank heaven he did not search me and find out that I am a detective. I may be able to work my way out of this. Even if he does destroy the will, I still have seen it, and know that Teenie Rogers is sole heir."

Light enough came in through the window from an electric lamp on Wabash avenue to enable Alice to find the gas jet, which she lighted.

The room was certainly not the "gilded cage" which Buck had called it, but it was a decently furnished bedroom.

It had no communicating door with the room beyond.

This house, as Alice later learned, also belonged to Mrs. Rea, and was run as a furnished room house in connection with the Bridge and Poker Club next door.

Relieved to find matters no worse, Alice sat down in a rocking chair and waited for some time.

She could not hear a sound, so she concluded that everyone had retired, including the one-eyed man himself.

"I ought to be able to work out of here all right," she thought. "Now is certainly my chance."

She examined the keyhole.

The key was in the lock.

Clearly Buck had no suspicion that his prisoner was other than a helpless woman, for he had taken no extraordinary precautions to secure her.

So Alice got busy, and the first thing she did was to produce a peculiar pair of pliers with long, slim blades.

These she inserted in the keyhole and easily turned the key straight.

Then giving it a quick push the key dropped on the carpeted floor outside.

The rest was easy.

In a moment Alice had the door open by aid of her skeleton keys.

The light in the hall had been extinguished, and she turned off the one in the room.

Then she had no other idea than to make the best of her way to the street.

But when she had groped to the front hall she was attracted by a faint light which shone up the basement stairs.

Alice carefully undid the fastenings of the front door and returned to the stairs.

She could hear voices talking below.

Should she investigate?

Had she any real interest in the sayings and doings of the one-eyed man?

She would have answered that question in the negative but for the will.

There seemed a bare possibility that she might be able to recover it, and the brave girl was willing to take her chance, even at considerable personal risk.

So she tip-toed to the basement stairs.

The light came from under the door of the front room, which was closed, and the voices were talking in-

side, but Alice could not make out what was being said. She groped her way through the hall to the kitchen, and entered there.

Here she found herself in luck.

The kitchen was unlighted, but the doors leading through a dish pantry into the front basement stood wide open.

Alice could hear every word now, but she could see nothing from where she stood.

"Ten ounces, a half and a quarter!" the voice of the one-eyed man was saying. "Got that down?"

"I'm putting it down," was the reply. "Come, hurry up. You know blame well that the weekly meeting of the Bank Burglars' League is to be held here in this basement at six A. M. If it is to be 3-2-6-9 instead of 3-4-6-9 we want to get a little sleep."

"I'm most through weighing the gold, Charley," answered Buck. "Yes, it will have to be. We may as well pull the job off at the Halstead Street Bank to-morrow night."

"To-night, you mean. It is after midnight now."

"Well, we shall soon be through. When we come to divide up on this gold which blew our way after, well, never mind what, and to divide what we pick up at Halstead street, we can afford to pull out and lie low for awhile."

"Oh, speak out! What the deuce! Who can hear? After you shot McCauslan and swiped the Denver gold. You mean it, then say it. The man was getting ready to dump us. When he engaged Old King Brady to come into the bank and do the spy act, that was the limit. He deserved no sort of consideration at our hands."

"Well, he did! And after all the trouble we went to in helping him work out his plot against Dick Welch. I'll tell you something, Charley, which probably you don't know. Mac would have killed his nephew in the bank that night, sure thing."

"You don't know it."

"No, but I am satisfied of it."

"Don't say a thing unless you are sure of it. In our business there's no room for blundering, Buck."

"You're a nice one to talk about blunders after putting one of the Bank Burglars' League notification letters in Dick Welch's pocket instead of the fake letter his uncle gave you; which would have made it look as if Dick was mixed up in the stealing of the Denver gold."

"Well, you have me there, Buck, I will admit, and—oh, what's the use talking about it? Will you put another ingot on the scales and go on with your work?"

There was a rattle of metal against metal.

"Nine, three-quarters and an eighth!" called Buck.

Alice had heard enough.

She had solved the mystery of the bank robbery, of the plot against Dick Welch, of the murder of Col. McCauslan, and last, but by no means least, she had located the Bank Burglars' League.

Nor was this all. The mysterious figure letters were also made plain, and there would be a chance to prevent the burglarizing of another bank.

No wonder Alice felt triumphant.

"I suppose I ought to pull right out," she said to her-

self. "All the same, I am determined to see if they actually have the gold in there."

She tip-toed through the pantry and peered through the crack of the half-open door.

It was even so.

Buck and another sat at a table, upon which was a small scales.

A box filled with golden ingots was on the table, too, and there was another on the floor.

The one-eyed man was in the act of weighing an ingot then, and his companion was making notes on a sheet of paper.

Alice backed away, glided through the hall and escaped by the front door.

"If I only can put my finger on the Bradys," she thought, "we can bring this case to a sudden end."

She hurried to the Sherman House, hoping at least to find Old King Brady there.

But it was not so.

Neither the old detective nor Harry was at the hotel. There was nothing for Alice to do but wait.

CHAPTER XI.

A KICK-UP AT THE SECRET MEETING.

Dr. Mandeville did not do much talking after he left Col. Dusty's with Mr. Ivory.

They went to Michigan avenue and took a car, riding for a considerable distance.

Alighting then, they went on to the middle of the block, pausing before a house which had arape on the door bell.

"Gee!" exclaimed Mr. Ivory. "Ada must be dead!"

It was the Bridge and Poker Club sure enough.

But Mr. Ivory did not turn in there.

He started to enter the next house by the basement door.

Dr. Mandeville made as if he intended to follow him.

Then suddenly he pressed his hand to his stomach and gave a groan.

"What's the matter now?" demanded Ivory.

"Cramps," returned the doctor, hoarsely. "I'm going to a drug store," and he hurried away.

Just then the basement door was heard to open.

Two young men now came out.

One was Jack Spence, who had been pulled in at Ada Rea's, but through the remarkable pull of Mr. Oliver Wainwright, managed to get himself turned loose, while the other was "Mr. Wainwright" himself.

"Who was that fellow?" demanded Spence, having said "Howdy" to Mr. Ivory.

"Doc," was the reply. "Who have you got here?"

"Oh, a friend of mine."

Mr. Ivory, seeing that he was not wanted, remarked that he was going on in."

"What's the matter with Doc? Why didn't he come in?" demanded Spence.

"He was took sick," was the reply. "He's going to get hotdrops or something. He'll be back."

And Mr. Ivory passed into the house.

"Sorry, Wainwright," said Spence, speaking in a confidential whisper, "but you couldn't hardly expect it, you know. That man is an old hand at the business. The Bradys are on our track, and he is naturally suspicious of strangers. I'm bound to work you into the league, as we call our bunch, sooner or later, though. When shall I see you again? Meet me at Col. Dusty's at six o'clock. We will have one or two and then get supper together."

They shook hands and parted.

Young King Brady, satisfied with his night's work, walked rapidly down the avenue.

He had put in the entire night with Spence, playing billiards in the private room of an all-night saloon of a little better grade than Col. Dusty's, and had so far made good as to get the young burglar to confess to him that he was a member of a regularly organized band.

Harry expressed himself as anxious to be allowed to join the band if possible, and got so far as to persuade Spence to introduce him to the "boss."

It was this which had brought them to Buck Rea's house, and to Buck and no one else Harry was introduced.

Buck received him rather coldly, and took Spence to task for drinking and for going about with a stranger.

But the burglar, assuring him that he had known "Oliver Wainwright" well in "Little Old New York," the one-eyed man relented, and told Harry that he might call around again some time with Spence, but he could do nothing for him then.

And this was how Young King Brady came to be on hand when Dr. Mandeville was so fortunately seized with the cramps.

Feeling now that he had made a great discovery, Harry hurried to the Sherman House.

Early as was the hour and late as had been the hour of her retiring, he found Alice up and dressed.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" she exclaimed when he entered the room. "Where is Mr. Brady then?"

"I'm sure I don't know," replied Harry. "I haven't seen him since yesterday afternoon. Isn't he in his room?"

"No. He hasn't been here since yesterday."

"I have located the hold-out of the Bank Burglars' League, and have also proved the existence of such an organization."

Alice laughed.

"Great, indeed!" she said. "But I think I can go you one better. I have not only located the holdout of the Bank Burglars' League, but I know all about the plot against Dick Wele, I know who killed Col. McCauslan, and who got away with the Denver gold, and where it now is, and a few other things."

The bell of the room telephone rang.

It was a call from the office.

Old King Brady was calling on the public telephone downstairs it seemed, and wanted to speak with one of his partners.

Harry hurried downstairs.

"Listen, Harry," said the old detective over the wire as soon as talk began; "you are to get to police headquarters instantly. Arrange to lead a raid of plain-

clothesmen upon No. — Michigan avenue as quickly as possible. Understand?"

The number given was that of the house which Young King Brady had just left.

"Correct!" called Harry. "But what about that?"

"Can't stop to explain now," was the reply. "Let them arrest everyone found on the premises. They better break in by the basement door, but let particular care be taken to guard the front door and the rear." Then the old detective hung up the receiver, and Harry got a move on.

Meanwhile Dr. Mandeville must have found relief from his cramps, for certain it is that just about that time he might have been seen returning along Michigan avenue to the headquarters of the Bank Burglars' League.

Several men had entered by that basement door since Harry left Jack Spence, and now it was Dr. Mandeville's turn to go in, but he had so timed himself that he was entering on the heels of another, who, seeing the old man, saluted him familiarly as "Doc."

And Dr. Mandeville allowed this man to do the knocking.

Three raps were given in a peculiar way.

A young man opened the door, and on the heels of the other Dr. Mandeville passed in.

There were six men sitting about in the basement around the table on which Alice had seen Buck Rea weighing the golden ingots, and Buck himself was at the head.

Whatever they had been discussing before the entrance of Dr. Mandeville was not made plain, for at this moment Buck turned upon the doctor and demanded particulars about his arrest the day before.

He got the same story which had been given Mike, the "barkeep," and it was listened to in silence.

"And who was the detective who pulled you in?" demanded Buck.

"He was a man to whom I couldn't lie as far as my identity was concerned," replied the doctor, hoarsely. "It was Old King Brady himself."

Dr. Mandeville sat quietly watching that terrible eye. Clearly there was something in the wind.

All felt it and all were silent.

Meanwhile that eye remained fixed upon the doctor, who presently slowly rose.

Buck rose with him.

"I seem to be in the way here," remarked Dr. Mandeville. "I will retire."

"You fraud! You are Old King Brady himself!" Buck suddenly shouted.

Quick as a lightning flash he whipped out a revolver. But he was no quicker than the other.

Everybody sprang to their feet.

"You're crazy, Buck!" cried Mr. Ivory. "He's Doc all right."

"You're soggy or you wouldn't fool yourself like you do," hissed Buck. "Seize him, boys! He must never leave this house alive!"

There was no firing.

Where would have been the use on Old King Brady's part?

Strong hands seized him, but first he flung his re-

volver on the table, knowing well that it would be taken from him.

"Yes, I am Old King Brady!" he said, calmly. "I tried a bold game, and it has failed."

"Bold, indeed," retorted Buck, pocketing his weapon. "I have Big Ike all right."

"Has he squealed?"

"That's my secret and my hold on you, Buck."

He had them there, and they knew it.

"We must go slow," said Buck, who as yet did not even know of Alice's escape. "Tie him up. It will not help us any to kill him. It would only bring a bees' nest about our ears."

They bound Old King Brady hand and foot then, and carrying him down into the cellar, laid him on the floor and retreated.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

For over half an hour Old King Brady laid there listening to every sound.

It seemed to him certain that the gang had left the house.

Doubtless they had their watchers posted, and would not fail to know when the raid was pulled off.

And at last it came.

Old King Brady heard them when they broke in by the basement door; heard them tramp through the rooms and ascend the stairs.

It began to look as if they really were going to miss the cellar, when at last they came.

Harry was in the lead, and it was he who discovered his partner and set him free.

"You've got no one?" was Old King Brady's first question when Harry helped him to his feet.

"No; not a soul in the house," was the reply. "Looks as if whatever scheme you have been working did not pan out just as you intended, Governor."

"No; it was a miss," was the reply. "However, it can't be helped, so say no more."

"I'll say no more, but there is one upstairs who has a whole lot to say."

"Ha! Who?"

Alice, of course."

"Come, let us go to her," said Old King Brady.

Meanwhile Alice, who had accompanied the raiders, was doing some detective work in the front basement on her own account.

Of course she was thinking of the Denver gold.

She looked in the closet; she looked here and there and everywhere, but could find no trace of it.

"Here he is!" cried Harry, as he followed Old King Brady up out of the cellar with a couple of plainclothesmen behind him. "A nice piece of business! Found him gagged and bound down there!"

"Yes, a nice piece of business," repeated Old King Brady; "that was the time I failed. But come, Alice! I hear you are the wise one; impart your wisdom to me!"

Alice told her story.

"If the gold was here when I came into this house, then it is here now," declared Old King Brady. "Let me see if I can find the Denver gold."

He found it!

After a brief search Old King Brady raised a secret trapdoor in the basement closet, and there in a deep box which extended part way down into the cellar, the boxes of golden ingots were discovered.

The gold proved to be almost intact, and great was the rejoicing at the Nineteenth Bank when the old detective landed it there.

Alice's story told to the chief of police set Dick Welch free.

Teenie was visited by Alice.

She knew nothing of the will until Alice told her, and a pretty well excited girl was left in Park avenue when Alice finally quit the house.

Meanwhile the Bradys set out to gather in the bank burglars, but nothing could be found of any of them.

They also visited the Halstead Street Bank, and stirred up the officers pretty well.

Here a singular state of affairs was discovered.

It appeared that there had been a fire next door to the bank some time before, and the building being completely destroyed, the cellar was pretty well filled with bricks.

These were piled up against the bank wall directly behind the vault.

Originally the bank had occupied the burned building, and had built their vault partly in the cellar of the present bank, which they also owned.

When they moved, which was some time before the fire, they cut another door in what had been the back of the vault.

Thus the vault now used had a door front and rear.

The Bradys immediately got into the cellar.

Here a discovery was promptly made.

The bricks had been opened up behind the vault.

Although the bank people had never known this, there being a fence in front of the lot, the wall was now clear against the vault.

Plainly this was the "work already done," alluded to by Buck Rea in the conversation Alice had overheard.

And also, thanks to Alice, the Bradys knew that instead of 3-4-6-9 it was to be—if indeed it now was to be at all—3-2-6-9.

And the next day was the night of the second of September.

At six minutes past three A. M. the job should be pulled off.

Needless to say the Bradys and their policemen proposed to be on hand, and they silently gathered outside the fence about half-past two o'clock.

It would have been as well if they had come earlier. The Bank Burglars' League must have changed their hour for some reason never explained.

Old King Brady and Harry were first on the ground. No policeman was in sight.

"Confound the luck!" muttered Old King Brady. "It would be well to find out if anyone else is here," breathed Harry. It strikes me very forcibly that I hear a noise behind that fence."

"And so do I, but we are minus a ladder, worse luck. That was to be brought from the station, you know."

They peered through a crack in the fence.

"Why, they are at it now!" whispered Harry.

But three men alone were on the job.

With a sledgehammer and a crowbar they had cut through the wall at the back of the old vault.

Just as the Bradys caught sight of this outfit the three men ran back into the cellar.

"By jove, they are going to blow the vault!" breathed Harry.

At the same instant a muffled explosion was heard.

And just then came the police, bringing the ladder.

The Bradys and the police gained the top of the fence just in time to trap the burglars.

They had forced the door of the vault.

One was entering.

"Cops! Cops!" shouted another, and he started to run.

With revolvers drawn and dark lanterns in hand, the Bradys and their allies jumped down from the fence and promptly put an end to the job.

Escape was cut off at the rear, and all three were rounded up.

They proved to be Buck Rea, Jack Spence and Jim Ivory.

In Buck's pocket was found his sister-in-law's will.

Teenie's fortune was secured.

* * * * *

And thus came the end of the Bank Burglars' League.

Two more of its members were captured at Col. Dusty's a day or two later—the rest escaped.

As no membership roll was discovered, it was never known who they were.

But the Bradys were satisfied.

Buck was held for the murder of Col. McCauslan.

He stuck it out at first, but Big Ike Sloan confessed and was a witness against him.

They had enticed Col. McCauslan to the bank, and there Buck shot him to get the gold.

Buck died on the gallows, the others are now in Joliet.

Dick married Teenie, who is now a millionaire through her inheritance from Ada Rea.

For the detectives this case proved very profitable.

They got the promised reward from the Clearing House for trapping the Bank Burglars' League; also a reward from the Halstead Street Bank for saving their cash, and Teenie, on her lover's account, chipped in, too, which was only right, for wealth and happiness blew in her way as the direct result of the successful ending of the case of "The Bradys and 3-4-6-9."

THE END.

Read "THE BRADYS AND THE BOY DETECTIVE; or, TRACKED BY A BRANDED ARM." which will be the next number (521) of "Secret Service."

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ITEMS WORTH READING.

The biggest catfish caught in the Kentucky River for a long time was caught by Sanford Carter at Polsgrove's Landing. It weighed sixty pounds, and when tied to a rail on the shoulders of two men its tail touched the ground. Mr. Carter took the fish to Frankfort and had it on exhibition. Several years ago a catfish weighing 115 pounds was caught just below the lock, but the former holds the record for recent fishing.

In the observatory of Columbia University is one of the most accurate clocks in the world. It has run for several months with a mean error of only fifteen thousandths of a second and a maximum error of thirty thousandths of a second per day. That means that it does not vary more than half a second a month, or six seconds a year. Compare this with the first pocket timepiece, the "Animated Egg of Nuremberg," which required winding twice a day and varied half an hour in the same time! Compare it with some of the highest priced watches manufactured to-day, which often vary more than ten seconds a week, and you will have some idea of the refinements in the science of measuring time. Yet even this accuracy is surpassed by some famous timepieces, if the trade magazines are to be believed. There have been accounts in them of clocks or watches that have varied less than a second in periods as long as ten years. The clock at the University of Columbia is an astronomical clock. It is surrounded by a glass case in which a partial vacuum is maintained, and in order that the case may not be opened or disturbed, the winding is done automatically by electricity. The clock is set up in a room especially constructed to keep it free from jar or vibration. The temperature and barometric conditions are maintained practically constant, and every possible precaution is taken to minimize the errors of the running rate.

The following simple instructions concerning footgear will not only cause shoes and socks to shock Susan less, but it will cause them to last twice as long as usual. While your shoes are new, or before the soles are much worn, apply with a small brush several coats of linseed oil, letting it dry in well each time before re-applying. The oil acts much the same on the leather as it does on wood, and if the applications of oil are repeated frequently, the sole may be preserved intact indefinitely. It sounds unreasonable to talk of preserving hosiery to any appreciable extent, but it may be done. The oftener hosiery is washed the longer it will last. By washing I do not necessarily mean the ordinary laundry method, which is calculated to fade and rot the fiber. Really, to preserve hosiery,

it must have personal supervision. Stockings should never be worn longer than one day. They should then be rinsed in lukewarm water, with a few drops of ammonia in it, dried, and worn without ironing. This repeated wetting of the fiber keeps it so firm and strong that it will not break at the points of greatest distension. This treatment applies to cotton, lisle thread and silk hosiery. If you will treat your new hose this way from the beginning, you need darn but very little. Of course, in time, all hosiery, however expensive or strong, will succumb to wear. But the above method of treatment will double the lasting qualities.

WITH THE FUNNY FELLOWS

The Heiress—Oh, papa! The earl has proposed! Papa
Bigwadd—H'm! What's his proposition?

Neighbor—I want to ask if you'd mind not using that worm exterminator you've bought for your garden? Suburbanite—And why not, pray? Neighbor—Well, you see, I'm planning to keep chickens.

Mr. Goldleigh (severely)—There must be a check to this extravagance. Clarice—Exactly, papa; and make it a big one, won't you?

Gentleman—It's no use your whining to me; I can see through you. Beggar—So yer ought, guvnor; I've 'ad nuthin' to eat for a week.

"Officer, I appeal for protection! A man is following me and attempting to make love to me!" "Begorry, Oi've been lookin' for an esaped lunatic. Where is he?"

The following extract from a letter of thanks is cherished by its recipient: "The beautiful clock you sent us came in perfect condition and is now in the parlor, on top of the book shelves, where we hope to see you soon, and your husband, also, if he can make it convenient."

"Do you think any girl ever proposes in leap year, as they say, Jennie?" he asked. "Not unless she is obliged to," answered the maiden. "H'm! I hadn't thought of that," he said, after a pause. "But, George," she said, laying her hand affectionately upon his arm and looking into his eyes, "you, I am sure, will never force me to that humiliation." "No—er—that is to say—of course not—" Three minutes later George was Jennie's accepted.

He had a habit of unexpectedly bringing home guests to dinner, and his wife finally determined to put a stop to it. So when he called up the other afternoon and said he wanted to entertain a friend from out of town she said it wasn't at all convenient. "But," he argued, "I'm very anxious to please this party. It means something to me. You understand?" "No," she answered. "We haven't a thing fit to eat, and I told the cook to get as simple a dinner as possible." "Then I can't bring my friend with me?" he mournfully asked. "No, you can't. I'm tired of being bothered. I told you so this very morning." "I remember," he said, "but I thought perhaps you would make an exception." "Well, I won't." "Not even when the friend is your own mother?" "Who? Mother! Is mother there? Oh, you wretched—" But before she could add the epithet he had rung off, with a wild chuckle.

THE THREE LOAVES.

By KIT CLYDE.

The day was bitterly cold in Virginia City, as winter days most generally are in that Alpine town, and though the sun was bright, its rays were as cheerless and chill almost as moonbeams.

Wild gusts whistled through the streets, breathing icicles and frost in their furious course, and driving every living thing away to seek shelter from its biting, penetrating breath.

And yet not every one was housed and sheltered from the pitiless gale, for he who had work to do or business to transact was summoned by inexorable duty to come forth to his post, or else when the day of reckoning came, abide by the consequences; but, with such exceptions as these, the male population generally sought the warm and friendly atmosphere of the drinking saloons, where, with "hot Scotch" and a glowing furnace, they managed to keep themselves from freezing.

Of these luckless exceptions, Abe Denning, the baker, was one.

In sunshine or storm, hail, rain, or snow, people must eat—eat, in fact, all the more voraciously because it does hail or snow, as if to penetrate an unseasonable joke upon the baker, who, especially in appetizing weather, must see to it that his customers' larders be properly stored with the rarest and best productions of his oven.

Even such cold weather as this did not deter Mr. Denning from attending to the wants of his customers with the assiduity and attention characteristic of his class.

While disappearing into a customer's house with an armful of bread, a girl of some fifteen years of age emerged from a miner's cabin close by, and, first casting wild and hurried glances around her, rushed to the baker's cart, and had just abstracted therefrom three loaves of bread, and was carrying them off, when the baker returned and caught her in the act.

Unfortunately, an officer was passing just at the time, and the baker, on the spur of the moment, and without giving the case that consideration which he otherwise might, gave her in custody on a charge of theft.

The girl, without any attempt at expostulation or explanation, burst into an agony of tears—a sufficient evidence, perhaps, that she was but a novice, after all, in the art of stealing.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "don't take me in this way. Let me wrap a shawl around my head, or the people will know me."

The officer, consenting, accompanied her into the cabin, while the baker drove away, telling the policeman he would be in court next day to prefer the charge before the police judge.

The officer, on entering, found no one in the cabin but three children—the youngest about three years old, and the eldest six.

The hut was cold and cheerless; there was no fire.

The two elder children, alarmed at the presence of the officer, exhibited discolored eyes and faces, which bore evidence of suffering and recent tears; while little Willie, the youngest, was crying and unappeasable, moping aimlessly around the cabin, looking into the empty closet, and putting his little hands mechanically into the empty dishes on the table.

"What made you steal the bread, my girl?" asked the officer.

At mention of the word "bread," little Willie looked tearfully and piteously in the man's face. The girl hugged the little fellow frantically in her arms, covering him with tears and kisses.

"Oh, my poor little brother!" she cried bitterly. "What will become of you now? This man is going to take your Lena away with him!"

Here the child threw his arms around her neck, as if to detain her by force; while the other two children screamed fit to break their hearts.

The officer, suspecting the actual state of affairs, began to cough convulsively; but, instead of applying his hand to his chest or throat, as people usually do on such occasions, he applied his handkerchief to his eyes.

"Is there no coal, or nothing at all to eat in the house?" said he, in a gurgling sort of voice.

"No coal, no bread, nothing to eat!" replied the girl, wringing her hands, "and poor Willie and the rest of us have had nothing to eat since yesterday morning."

Here the officer had another hard fit of coughing, and went away, saying that he would be back again in a short time.

"Is the man gone for bread?" asked the oldest of the children.

"Hush, Mollie, dear!" said Lena. "I don't know what he is gone for. He's not a bad man, anyhow, for he hasn't arrested me, as I thought he would."

In a few minutes the officer returned, with his arms full of bread and groceries, not forgetting some cakes and condiments for the smallest children; while another man at his heels carried a big sack of coal on his back.

At sight of the bread the children screamed with delight, while the officer now laughed, now coughed, and frequently applied his handkerchief to his face to wipe off the perspiration, as it were.

While Lena cut up large slices of bread, and helped the children and herself, the two men set to work and made a large fire in the stove, the glow of which soon diffused warmth and comfort through the cabin.

Then they cooked the meat, and made tea, and spread a steaming meal on the table for the four orphans, while they carved and attended to their wants until they were fully satisfied.

Happy, happy childhood, whose prerogatives are innocence, mirth and joy! The children, after their dinner, didn't look like the same children at all. Their faces were bright and joyous, happy and handsome, and in a few minutes they were playing and laughing and romping, as happy as if they had never felt the pangs of hunger.

"And now," said the officer, delighted at seeing the children so happy, "sit down, Lena, and answer me a few questions. Have you no father or mother?"

"We have no mother," was Lena's reply. "She died about a year ago, and father went away to Eureka to work about eight months ago, and we hain't seen him ever since."

"What is your father's name?"

"Dawson—Jim Dawson."

"And he has sent you no money—nothing?"

"Nothing. Never heard of him since he went away. But when he was going he left us a bag of flour, and lots of groceries and things—as much as would last us for six months, and he'd be sure and be back before the provisions were all out."

"And you got no letter from him at all?"

"Not one," replied Lena, with a deep sigh.

Poor Dawson had written to his children, however, but postal communication being at that time very irregular and uncertain in the Silver State, the children did not receive his letters.

"Well, I must go now," said the officer, after a pause, "but I will call for you to-morrow, and you'll have to accompany me to the police office, for I must do my duty, you know. Goodby."

And Lena Dawson was left alone with her little brothers and sisters.

She felt sad and lonesome after the departure of her kind

benefactor, but the buoyancy of childhood soon gained the ascendancy, and before bedtime the orphans were as happy as any group of little children in Virginia City.

Meantime, the report about the stealing of the bread and the destitute condition of the children got abroad.

Jim Dawson, a miner himself, was well known and popular among the miners, and the case created such a sympathy and elicited so many reminiscences and commentaries that quite a crowd was attracted next day to the police court.

Judge Moses presided.

The judge bore the name of being upright and honest, kind and benevolent, and if fault he had at all, it was thought to be a somewhat uncompromising rigor in the discharge of his official duties.

It was hard to say how the case would go.

After the transaction of some preliminary business the case was called.

The baker swore to the stealing of the bread, and identified the defendant as the thief.

The officer testified to the famishing condition in which he found the children, but said not a syllable about what he had done to relieve them.

Poor Lena stood trembling before the judge; thereupon a miner rustled through the crowd and stood before the bench, eyeing the judge with a deprecating look.

"I declare to the Almighty, jedge," said he, "I never knowed the state of Jim Dawson's children, and if I did—"

He dropped a twenty into Lena's trembling hand.

"You jest knowed as much about it as other folks," exclaimed another miner, excitedly, walking up and putting another twenty into the girl's hand with an indignant air that flung back any latent suspicion that he knew anything of the children's distress any more than anybody else.

Here Long Alec, a miner—so called on account of his height and size—slid timidly and bashfully up to Lena's side.

"Leeny," he said, in a half whisper, "hold yer' pinafore," and he slipped two twenties into her apron, and then slid back behind the crowd into a corner, and, holding his hat to his face, glanced timidly around, to see that he was completely out of sight.

Then came Wabbling Joe, who was far more bashful than even Long Alec, but put on a bold face, and laughed and talked loud to make believe that he was not bashful at all.

"Jedge," said Wabbling Joe, laughing and nodding familiarly at the court, to disarm that functionary of possible rigor in the trial of the case in hand—"Jedge, let the girl slide. She ain't done nothin' but what you or I would do if we was hungry!"

And poor Lena was once more the recipient of another present.

"What is your name, my girl?" asked the court.

"They call me Lena Dawson, sir," was the reply.

"Call you Lena Dawson! And I suppose Lena Dawson is your name, is it not?" observed the judge.

"No, sir, it ain't," returned the girl. "My father died when I was only three years old, and my mother got married to Mr. Dawson some time afterward. My proper name is Madeline Winters, but they call me Lena, for short."

"Madeline Winters! Where were you born?" asked the judge.

"In Kansas City, sir," was the reply.

"In Kansas City!" echoed the court, in a voice of still deeper gravity than before. "And what was your mother's maiden name, do you know?"

"Madeline Moses, sir," responded Lena.

"Madeline Moses! My Heavens! She was my sister!"

And Judge Moses, overcome with emotion, bowed his head on the desk, while a torrent of tears flowed down his face.

Just as the crowd, in obedience to the dictates of delicacy, were emerging from the police court, to let uncle and niece indulge the sacred joy of mutual recognition, Jim Dawson appeared at the door, having just returned from his prospecting tour in Eureka, and, with an innate sense of propriety that did honor to his acquaintances, who were all rejoiced to see him, was quietly permitted to join his relatives inside.

HOW TO FALL.

A few months ago I was engaged in some investigations concerning the modes of training employed by professional acrobats and gymnasts in educating children to take part in their performance, with a view to elucidating a certain point of considerable medical interest (in no way connected with the present question), and I learned that, since the precaution of a net has been insisted upon for the prevention of accidents in lofty tumbling, many gymnasts now make a "terrific descent" or "aerial dive" a special feature of their entertainment. Drops of sixty, eighty, or one hundred feet sheer, or even more, are not uncommon.

A member of the Hanlon-Volta troupe has dived from a height of no less than one hundred and twenty feet above the net, where circumstances have permitted of it, and declares that not only is he free from all inconvenience in the descent, which is made head foremost, but that he would be willing to fall from a much greater elevation, due extension of the capacity, elasticity, etc., of the net being provided. The extraordinary "spill" made by one of the Hanlon-Lees, formerly belonging to the above troupe, in the third act of "Le Voyage en Suisse," will be remembered by most of your readers, though it is remarkable rather for the arrest than the duration of motion. On being assured by the proprietor of some newly-invented mechanism applied to a novel feat of aerial gymnastics which he had taken up to the roof of a building to inspect, that there was no danger I made experiment of a descent of about fifty feet. Sixty feet was the extent of fall claimed by the gymnast himself, but I imagined that this would include the elevation of the highest point of the arc obtained by the oscillation of his trapeze, as well as the depression caused by his weight upon the net, and therefore calculate it to have been about ten or twelve feet less from the situation of my body, as I hung at arm's length from a motionless bar with my legs drawn up in a sitting posture, to the point where I impinged flat on my back on the cushions. I was conscious of no physical embarrassment while coming down, though I must confess that my mind was too much occupied with the possibilities contingent on arrival, to admit of any very accurate analysis of my respiratory sensations in transit.

The idea that the act of falling "stops the breath" so that the person who falls is dead before he reaches the ground is a very common one, and it would be interesting to know the testimony, if any exists, on which it is based. Nobody complains of suffocating in violent agitation of the air, such as that produced by a hurricane traveling at the rate of one hundred miles an hour. Of course, asphyxiation means more than an impediment to breathing, and a man falling from a great height might attain a speed exceeding one hundred miles per hour; but I am not acquainted with the records of any post-mortem examinations which bear out the asphyxiation theory. No matter what other lesions are found, the indications of this ought to be patent enough. Even more conclusive, to my mind, than the cases advanced in disproof by your contemporary are those innumerable of people who have fallen from lofty places, and, though sustaining fatal injury, have not expired immediately. Nor must it be forgotten that nervous shock alone may have sufficed to kill where no physical lesions of such gravity as to account for death can be detected.

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